



# Saint Mammon

A Literary Blue Book  
of



*American Society*



*By A member of it*



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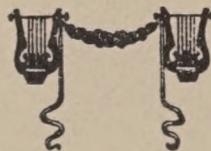




# SAINT MAMMON

A Novel of American Society

*Wm. H. Freeman*

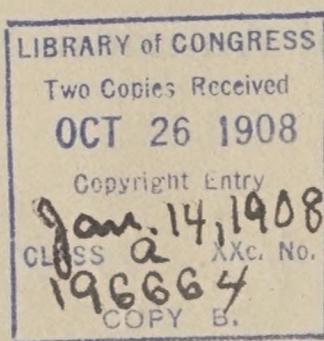


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Mrs. Snubbody-Jones very graciously permits herself to be  
at home to Society.

## THE AUTHOR'S BEST BOW



ONCE upon a time an European artist, being on a first visit to America, was asked if he found anything in the country to admire, and replied that in a certain city he ran across one of his own paintings, which impressed him favorably.

I take this as proof positive that a literary man may claim the right to champion his own work.

Therefore, while the orchestra is dispensing sweet melody, and the footlights are turned low, the author will avail himself of the opportunity to whisper a few words in the ears of the first-nighters who have assembled to criticise him.

Frankly, he begs their indulgence. As to the story itself, it is only another lesson in vanity and the comedy of human life. Let the sublime take off its hat to the ridiculous! Let the natural yield for a moment to the artificial!

Not only so, but he has attempted to resurrect an old literary form that has been rejected by modern realists, and he fears he challenges the critics by

the act. This novel belongs to the subjective school, and if that is not enough to condemn it at once, it is a satire in the bargain. Everybody is expected to protest, because humor, and not satire, is supposed to furnish the keynote of our budding American literature.

Consequently, the author makes his best bow to a critical public with a palpitating heart. It is hard enough to overcome stage fright; but the consciousness that all those grim-looking people in the front row have come here determined to find fault with him, makes his position very embarrassing. He is aware that the piece is peculiar, and he will be thrusting himself into it from time to time, after the fashion of the old Greek chorus. He is his own manager, his own conductor, and has charge of the stage business as well. He has aimed to write a melodrama, dealing with some phases of American society. Perhaps he has made a farce of it; or it may be voted only fit for the vaudeville.

It goes almost without saying that he does not feel very combative under such circumstances and regrets that he is forced to take up the cudgels in his own defense, right from the start. All the weak points in the plot force themselves on him with painful bluntness now—the labored episodes, that may impede the action, the clumsy climaxes, that can only disappoint—so that its clever things do not seem so good at this moment.

Ladies and gentlemen, I make you my best bow, and crave your indulgence for this new venture.

Anybody not satisfied with it may demand the money back from the box office. The play has been staged regardless of expense, so please try to endure it, until the curtain has gone down for the last time. The members of the company have been chosen with care. Please be ready to applaud, if one of them does a good turn, and don't be afraid to discover a new star among them.

And to those who differ with me in regard to literary standards, I beg to say that I seek no quarrel with the realists, when I point out that they only represent an extreme of the objective school. If now objective realism is such a fine thing, what is the harm in subjective realism? Surely, it is not fair that the subjective school be driven from the field of art altogether. The history of literature will show, I think, that art flourishes best when the subjective school and the objective have worked together to elevate it, and maintain the best standards by their friendly rivalry. If now we can improve the tone of our young literature by restoring the subjective to its rightful place, by all means let us do so.

America has produced two great novelists, who have attained a world celebrity. Strangely enough, one of them belongs to the subjective school, and the other belongs to the objective. Nathaniel Hawthorne is subjective, and with him repressed satire rises to the sublimest heights of the subjective philosophy. Edgar Allan Poe is objective, and it is a significant fact that in an age

of realism the critics crown Hawthorne and seek to ignore Poe. But to extol one of these men at the expense of the other is unjust. They are both great in their particular line. They belong to a period that is fast being recognized as the Augustan age of American letters, and they prove that the subjective school and the objective flourished together during that brilliant epoch.

But some one may ask why satire? Must we see the covert sneer in every sentence? Must we be told that society is all sham and humbug? Must we believe that people are hollow-hearted, and act from selfish motives alone?

I fancy it is a woman I am dealing with now, and, madam, I make you my best bow.

The satirist is not afraid to say that he does not deal in sweetmeats and sugarplums. Pickles would be more in his line, or some dish with plenty of spice in it. Of course, the public, which likes its pill coated, will make a wry face at many of the morsels he forces on its intellectual palate. As a matter of fact, there is very little difference between satire and some realism. But there are too many people in this world who think that everything they approve of has a sacred character, and it seems sacrilege to them if their prejudices are called into account. These people will resent the insinuations of the satirist, as they will frown at the bluntness of a realist. Let them stop to consider, however, that some of their most cherished idols may be only clay after all.

Furthermore, history will prove that there does not begin to be a society in any country until somebody has satirized it.

Now I grow bolder and hasten to state that a literary bluebook of American society, such as this novel aims to be, excuses satire, and calls for subjective moralizing in the bargain. Satire will suggest itself to its author for his own protection, because a satirist can say one thing when he means another. This is a kind of poetic license, that has been granted him by literary usage. The dull people, whom it might annoy, will miss the point of it altogether, and the clever ones will appreciate it best when its wit is slyly hinted. It is no light task to hit off the foibles of the fashionable world, and the man who would do so must be on his guard lest he offend it. He may hate sham and rail at hypocrisy openly; but to attempt to unmask society and to tear aside the thin veneer of affectation under which it may choose to hide itself—this is dangerous work, indeed!

But, in addition to all these drawbacks, I find myself handicapped in another particular. The leading lady of the company cannot be persuaded to have her diamonds stolen, in order to swell the receipts of the box office. In vain it has been represented to her that she owes it to me to submit to this kind of advertising. Furthermore, she objects strenuously to all things sensational. She will not go through a millrace, and be seized by the hair, just as she is about to be torn to pieces.

She will not be tied to a railroad track, when the lightning express is due. Neither will she drag the hero out of a dynamite mine ten seconds before the explosion. Lastly, she positively refuses to play against the stereotyped stage villain.

I ask myself in despair now, was ever genius foiled as mine is? It is not enough that I should be deprived of the only chance to create a pink-tea heroine; but in these days of sensationalism, I am forced to stand on the merits of my work alone.

If, therefore, my climaxes are voted tame affairs, and the plot is considered weak, the fault is not wholly mine. If the limelight is not turned on, when the galleries clamor for it, I respectfully request that I be held blameless.

But enough of this. While I have been talking at random here, just to keep my courage up, the people on the stage have been busy, and now send word that the supreme moment is at hand.

The footlights are beginning to twinkle, the orchestra strikes up an overture, and even the bald head of the bass viol wears an expectant air, as it bends over the instrument.

The members of the company have received the order to take the stage, and the play is about to begin.

Having now done everything in his power to ingratiate himself with the audience, and predispose them in his favor, again the author makes his best bow, and the curtain rings up on this comedy.

## BOOK I

### CHAPTER I

THE night on which Madge was expected to arrive, Mr. Willoughby went to the train, satisfied that he was about to behold a superior being, instead of the romping schoolgirl, with whom he had been only too glad to part a few weeks previous. For, candor compels the statement that his niece's sojourn at his home in Heathdale during the summer vacation had been marked by a series of escapades which led him to fear she would turn out nothing more than a harum-scarum tomboy. But, now that he had heard her praised in high quarters, he began to suspect that she had undergone some social metamorphosis since he beheld her last.

When his friend Mrs. Bangup fell to praising Madge one day as a girl likely to cut a figure in society, Mr. Willoughby could scarcely believe his ears. Bless my soul, what had happened to the child? For lack of better evidence he was inclined to accept this as a compliment to the family in general. He had always believed that Willoughby refinement was something very superior indeed,

and he was satisfied that it had begun to assert itself in this niece, in spite of her natural forwardness. Mrs. Bangup, be it remembered, was a woman whose friendship anybody might be proud of. She had taken a fancy to Mr. Willoughby, and sometimes placed her carriage at his disposal.

Then came another surprise. Mrs. Humphrey Provost, sister-in-law to the great Mrs. Saltearth, asked permission to take Madge abroad for a year after she had finished her education, and Mrs. Van Hurdle, whose daughter was attending the same boarding-school only the year before—the great Mrs. Van Hurdle, so well known in fashionable circles—invited Madge to spend Christmas recess at her house, and on the evening when this story opens, Mr. Willoughby found himself going to the depot to meet his niece in Emily Van Hurdle's company.

Now it was that his heart went out to her as it had never done before, and he admitted that the girl was a credit to him, and he had never realized how fond he was of her. Bless my soul, who would not be proud of a child that could win such praise as this!

Emily Van Hurdle had been Madge's room-mate the previous year at Miss Withermaid's Academy, and on the way to the station she entertained Mr. Willoughby by pouring into his ears such a list of his niece's virtues, that he was ready to believe her family instincts had begun to assert themselves at last. Yes, he was satisfied that she

was turning out a Willoughby of Willoughbys, after his own ideal.

Among other things, Miss Emily declared that Madge bade fair to be a great beauty, and was very clever in the bargain. Why, even the principal of the school, the pompous Miss Withermaid herself, spoke of her as her most promising pupil, and praise from such a source was not to be valued lightly, for Miss Withermaid was held in high repute for her mental attainments, and it was whispered in some fashionable drawing-rooms that in the fierce pursuit of culture she had mastered the writings of the lamented Robert Browning, who died before he had time to explain what his poetry meant.

Mr. Willoughby, we repeat, discovered now that he was very proud of Madge. Bless my soul, he had always considered her a wonder! It had been his idea all along that the chief aim of her education should be to bring out the Willoughby that was born in her, and that done he would have no fear for the rest. It was very evident that this was just what had happened, because people like Mrs. Van Hurdle would not have discovered her in any other case.

It was the height of Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby's ambition to get to be a man of fashion, and it could not fail to impress him in her favor, if his niece should develop a liking for the very society he himself aimed to shine in. He came to town this winter ostensibly for his invalid sister's health,

but at the same time he formed plans to push his interests in a social way as much as possible. Now that Madge had formed such desirable connections, he promised himself that the season was bound to be a profitable one for both of them. Everybody was so kind to him. Mrs. Brownjag called frequently at the hotel to inquire after his sister's health, Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller sent her flowers on two occasions, and the way Mrs. Salt-earth asked after her fairly brought tears to Mr. Willoughby's eyes. He felt that he would be willing to be bedridden himself for the sake of winning such sympathy.

If there had been no society in America, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby might have realized his opportunity by establishing it. As it was, he managed to make his existence known to people who stood high in it, and that in a way they could not very well ignore. He had succeeded in gaining admittance to the most select circles, which allowed him the privilege of being patronized by the nicest people. He met the Brownjags, and the Saltearths, and Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller asked him to call. He was dined by Mrs. Nonesuch, whom he could claim as a cousin on his mother's side, and he even made his best bow in the drawing-room of that patroness of fashion and privilege, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself. After this it seemed to Mr. Willoughby that there were no higher heights to which he might aspire.

On her own confession, Emily Van Hurdle was

just pining to behold Madge again. The two had not met since they parted the year before at Miss Withermaid's. However, she was able to restrain her feelings up to the moment the train arrived, but beyond that point decorum was intolerable. Before Mr. Willoughby had fairly grasped the situation she uttered a shriek, and running forward, threw herself into Madge's arms and began kissing her in a way that would have been censurable, except that they were misses in their teens, and had been so intimate at boarding-school. If Mr. Willoughby was a little startled by this display of emotionalism, he betrayed no sign of it. He had the most intense respect for Mrs. Van Hurdle, and could not very well criticise anything her daughter chose to do. If it had been any one else that met his niece in this fashion, he might have felt the impropriety of it. But everybody knew that Mrs. Van Hurdle's countenance only shines on those who have high hopes in society.

Mr. Willoughby was forgotten in the excitement of this meeting, and he availed himself of the opportunity to study Madge from the distance, and note how far her sudden metamorphosis had affected her appearance.

Yes, she had changed for the better, he was forced to own. She had grown more dignified, and those dark eyes of hers, at which he had been half afraid to glance at times, were not so fiery. Her father had those same eyes, and the memory they recalled to Mr. Willoughby was not altogether

a pleasant one. Now that he came to remark it she was not bad-looking, either. In fact, he would be willing to admit his niece was a very pretty woman; that is, of course, provided Mrs. Van Hurdle would say so to everybody, and if Mrs. Bangup, and above all, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, would endorse her statement.

During the drive homeward Mr. Willoughby sat in a corner of the carriage, and gave himself up to a kind of reverie. He looked moody enough, and probably he was thinking about the past and the mystery of his niece's birth and parentage. It was unknown even to her, and the one person who shared the secret with Mr. Willoughby would not be likely to reveal it.

Her father had been a wild young blade, and had brought sorrow and shame on his family by his recklessness. He had not even been married to her mother, until Mr. Willoughby made him do so on his deathbed. He then settled an income on the woman that had been the means of establishing her in the world as a respectable widow, and it eventually enabled her to marry again, and make a brilliant match at that. She pleaded that poverty had driven her to the first false step, and he was glad to put the same temptation away from her. He only accepted the care of her daughter because he got the impression that the mother was high-spirited, and did not care to have a reminder of her past. He was anxious that she have no further cause for reproach against his

family, and it had comforted him not a little afterwards to be able to reflect that he had made this woman respect a name, which otherwise she might learn to detest. Thus he did penance for his brother's sin.

But he had loved him with all his faults, and the memory of them was a cross to him even now. Sometimes as he looked at the child he used to wince under her glances, because they were so much like her father's. He always fancied he saw something in her to call back memories that were only regret. Could it be that she was left to him as a punishment for his pride? Suppose she were to grow up to exact some penalty for the wrong that had been her mother's undoing?

Under these gloomy reflections he had learned to fear her, and at times his manner towards her had been cold and repelling. What could he hope for from this waif, who was born of recklessness, and defiance of the laws of society? His only hope was his unswerving faith in the family breeding. To be sure, it had not proved itself in the case of her own father, but there are exceptions to every rule. Perhaps in the daughter the Willoughby instinct would triumph over her vicious heredity. The Willoughbys had always been a proud race, and were of aristocratic lineage.

Madge did not pay the least attention to her uncle until the carriage stopped in front of the house, so taken up was she with her schoolgirl friend. The two sat purring and fondling each

other like a couple of lovers, and it was amusing to listen to their artless prattle. When, however, he assisted her from the carriage, in sudden contrition she fell on his neck and kissed him, as she had never done in her life.

Mr. Willoughby blushed. He actually blushed like a girl, standing there on the curb, with the gas-light falling full upon him.

## CHAPTER II

A MAN of the world, even though he be a stickler for all the culture and refinement that are to be had this side of snobbery, is not apt to view life from the standpoint of some optimists. He may have discovered that this thing we call civilization, and are wont to plume ourselves upon, is only gilded on the outside with our vaunted progress, but within it is full of decayed barbarisms. Even in this sceptical age the world still clings to a few fables, that it will not repudiate in spite of argument. There are a great many falsehoods that manage to masquerade as truths, and it would be the height of folly to proclaim their real character. When, too, it comes to morals, who shall say whether some of the things men call virtues will pass current in heaven? A practical philosopher once gave it as his deliberate opinion, if the devil would only write his decalogue, all the saints would be accusing him of plagiarism.

Life, says the modern sage, is a condition that certain forms of matter are forced to undergo. Small wonder, then, if we are constantly rebelling against our environment. Small wonder, if we do not always realize our opportunities. Our fathers

made hero tragedy out of history. Are we making comedy out of it? Already in this free America we have discovered that we cannot live up to certain fine theories about equality that they proclaimed, and in particular, class prejudice is too much for us. Some good citizens clamor for a little privilege, and you may trust our fierce democracy to be setting up counterfeits of nobility. Of course we are not proud, we simple-minded republicans, and of course there should be no distinctions of rank among us. Nevertheless, as the result of our political dogmas, we have become the most hypocritical aristocrats on the face of the earth. We bow down to the shadow of a title, and then deny its substance.

Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that an American gentleman of Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby's polished elegance should believe history began with one of his own ancestors. He was born to notions that stood for a kind of heredity, and this was one of them. As he never permitted anybody to question these, he had come to regard them as infallible, and accepted them very much as he did the fact he was a Willoughby—thankfully, gratefully—and never thought of exchanging them for any others. Nay, more, he would not be afraid to stand up before the world and proclaim these opinions, particularly as he had reason to know that such authorities as Mrs. Bangup and Mrs. Snubbody-Jones believed in this sort of prejudice.

There was nothing he dreaded so much as vul-

garity, and perhaps he was over-sensitive about this at times. His conceptions of heaven itself were very aristocratic. Ill-bred persons were to be excluded from it, or at least they were not to be admitted there, until they had passed through some spirit-elevating purgatory. Just fancy common-looking angels!

Here again family instinct was simply asserting itself in his character. The Willoughbys were nothing if they were not respectable, and they preferred obscurity as a family, provided it stood for respectability. As far back as one would care to go in their past, the Willoughbys were very respectable nobodies, and they cared nothing for greatness, if it had to come at the expense of reputation.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was a pleasant enough man to meet, but a hard one to know intimately. He possessed an affable manner, but it was the kind that repels every approach towards familiarity. Let no one censure him if he chose to believe that the most important date in American history was the day the first Willoughby landed on this continent—more so than the one on which Columbus discovered it, or that famous Fourth of July, when the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Furthermore, the reader will be kind enough to remember that he was good to his family when the members of it went wrong, as he proved in the case of his own brother. We have seen how he

stood father to his niece, when she was left an orphan in the world; and to his sister, who was an invalid, he was very indulgent. Then there was another sister, who tried his patience more than these; but to her also he remained loyal, and he did his duty by her, in so far as she permitted him.

It must be confessed that this sister was as different from Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby as daylight is from darkness; her peculiarities are only to be accounted for on the score of social degeneration. In proof of this it is only necessary to state that instead of caring for society, she was constantly making war upon it. Fortunately she had married, so that the two were able to live apart, and the intimacy that existed between them now was of the most formal kind. Mr. Willoughby always called on her whenever he went to town, very much as he would have done on some acquaintance he had met only recently. However, this coolness was not his fault; for his sister, Mrs. Wadham Adams by name, made these visits as disagreeable as possible. Mr. Willoughby had learned from bitter experience that it was useless to try to placate her, and perhaps he only went to see her in the hope, that by so doing, he might be able to shield himself against her malevolence. She not only criticised the way he treated their invalid sister, but she insisted on telling him stories about other invalids, who were sure to be the kind of people Mr. Willoughby did not care to know. In fact, they were just such persons as he could not know and keep the friend-

ship of Mrs. Bangup, and consequently he did not wish to hear anything about them. Furthermore, she would ask after parties in Heathdale whom her brother was particular to avoid, and would send them messages by him, that he would never think of delivering, as she knew very well. On the whole his regard for her as a Willoughby and his own sister was put to a severe test.

There is an inartistic way of taking poverty that makes it appear simply hideous, and there is a vulgar way of being rich that renders wealth very offensive. Now, Mrs. Wadham Adams made charity disagreeable to a number of very respectable people.

In spite of her self-sacrifice, in spite of her apparent sympathy for the unfortunate, she was sure to have a sting in reserve for somebody. She had been known to go to the pastor of her church with a pitiful tale about a dressmaker in reduced circumstances, and after the unsuspecting divine recommended her to several ladies of his flock, she turned out to be a creature with whom Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller's son had been implicated in a scandal. If any family of position had secrets of a compromising nature it would fain hide from the public eye, Mrs. Wadham Adams would find them out, and the way she would spring them on the friends of these parties was startling, to say the least. When that awful divorce case of Isgood versus Isgood was occupying the attention of the newspapers, and many society people were putting on

sackcloth and ashes, Mrs. Wadham Adams proved herself a better medium for collecting malicious stories than the reporters themselves.

It is a further proof of the superior virtues of this most excellent woman that she kept her husband in subjection to her. Mr. Wadham Adams was a little man of fierce aspect and ungovernable temper. Experience had taught him that the only hope he had against his wife was by being perpetually in a state of rage, so that now she could not order him to come to dinner, without he exploded like a keg of gunpowder. She had forced him to quarrel with his own family, and had turned all his former friends against him. People spoke of him as Mrs. Wadham Adams' husband, and everybody treated him with the utmost condescension.

Thus we perceive how it is possible for a woman, of fine character and irreproachable morals, to make herself feared by the exercise of those very virtues we have been taught to extol.

Mr. Willoughby felt that he had enough engagements to take up all his time during the brief stay he expected to make in town, until Madge returned to school. Mrs. Humphrey Provost had appealed to him about her affairs. She was always doing this. She and Mr. Willoughby were old friends, and she relied on him to be her confidant in matters of some delicacy. He had planned now to give up several days to her without letting Madge know anything about it. There

was a tie between him and this strange woman that puzzled many people. Nevertheless, busy as he would be, he did not forget his duty to his married sister.

"Of course you will call on your aunt, Mrs. Wadham Adams?" he remarked to Madge.

He had been left alone with his niece in Mrs. Van Hurdle's drawing-room the morning after her arrival.

Madge frowned for an instant.

"I suppose I must!" was her answer.

Right here it may be well to state that there was no love lost between Madge and this relative.

His niece's manner of answering was not lost on her uncle, and he felt called upon to comment on it.

"Your aunt has always been kind to you, I am sure," he said.

"Oh, I will go as a duty and not as a pleasure, so please don't say any more about it."

Mr. Willoughby gazed out of the window for a moment at the hurrying throng on the street. When he spoke again it was half absently.

"You will find as you grow older it does not do to cherish grudges against people."

Madge ignored this bit of moralizing. Her thoughts may have been elsewhere while her uncle was delivering it. Emily Van Hurdle was getting up some theatricals, and Madge was to take part in them. The play was to be "The Mistletoe Bough," with Madge as the bride. She had acted

this rôle at Miss Withermaid's, and was considered a star in it. She might have been thinking about the dress she would wear on this occasion.

"I have sent word we shall call this afternoon," her uncle said again.

Madge sighed in spite of herself.

"As you will, Uncle Roosevelt! Only don't accept an invitation to dinner, I beg of you. I have such a surprise in store for Emily, and I can't be disappointed now."

Mr. Willoughby knew what that surprise was, and promised to obey the injunction.

Madge's aversion for her aunt was one of the impressions of childhood, which she had not been able to outgrow. When she was a little girl Mrs. Wadham Adams had invited her to her house and deemed it her duty to give her some advice, that made her very miserable. She told her about the hapless lot of orphans, with whom she had become acquainted in the course of her charitable work, and proposed that Madge learn a trade, with a view of making herself independent.

It was not so much the thought of having to earn her own bread that depressed the child. It was the sense that she was alone in the world. Madge went home in a flood of tears and poured out her woes to Aunt Kate, almost causing the patient invalid to become angry. Mr. Willoughby was furious when he heard of it. He took pains to call on Mrs. Wadham Adams at once, and he found opportunity to insinuate that he had adopted

Madge, and was as fond of her as he would be of a daughter of his own. She would inherit all his property, and he had already settled an income on her, which he considered belonged to her by right of his brother. Accordingly, all plans relating to her future were to be left with him.

If Mrs. Wadham Adams had acted on this hint, and had tried to win the child's affection even now, Madge might have outgrown the dislike that she formed for her. But it was a maxim of this excellent female that she had a duty to perform by everybody she knew, and in this case she kept her niece informed about the helpless lot of orphans, until the girl fast growing into womanhood felt a repugnance at the very sight of her.

Therefore it was that Madge kept recalling things of a disagreeable nature when she found herself sitting in Mrs. Wadham Adams' parlor that afternoon, listening to reports of her charitable work, and trying to ignore the moral this most exemplary woman was drawing from it.

That same hopeless feeling came back to her, as when a child she hearkened tearfully while her aunt planned for her future, and succeeded in making her utterly wretched. A mere schoolgirl on a brief vacation visit to town may be excused if she looks at things from an impressionist's standpoint, and Madge was an impressionist by temperament.

The sight of the place stifled her. The stiff-looking furniture set in severe upholstering made

her anxious to fly the spot, and the pictures on the walls only excited a shudder, because they were so grawsone. In one of them Abraham was sacrificing Isaac, in another Hagar was dying in the Wilderness, in a third a martyr was being led to execution, and outraged virtue was suffering in the rest. There was a repelling air about the very window curtains, and the bric-à-brac looked as if it had been inherited from an undertaker.

It appeared that her aunt was seeking to rescue from perdition a profligate young man in the last stages of dissipation, who was cousin to Mrs. Wholepush, and had been disowned by his family on account of his immoral conduct. Of course she had interested herself in him out of pity; nevertheless she took care to acquaint herself with all the unpleasant details of his history, and was ready to report them to as many of Mrs. Wholepush's friends as she could meet. Mr. Willoughby was proud to be considered one of these, and he did not relish her references to this aristocratic woman, who was a shining light of society.

In this connection it is pertinent also that Mrs. Wadham Adams paraded this young man's affairs before others of Mrs. Wholepush's friends, so that she caused them some uneasiness for a time, as most of her efforts in this line always did. One day, however, it dawned upon her that he could no longer be used to make people feel uncomfortable, and then it was amazing how quickly she dropped him.

Then there was another party in Mrs. Wadham Adams' drawing-room, whom it seemed to her brother such tales interested more than they need. This was no other than Mrs. Tripp of Heathdale, whom he had seen a dozen times in his life, and as often ignored. She was a very ordinary sort of a woman, something in the new-rich line, and was reported to have interested herself in Mrs. Wadham Adams' charities for the reason that every social opportunity was closed against her. There was something in the way Mr. Willoughby greeted her on being introduced that betrayed the state of his feelings. Just fancy a man who aspired to the friendship of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, caring for such a person! The idea was ridiculous, and anybody but Mrs. Wadham Adams would appreciate it.

His sister seemed determined to make it as disagreeable as possible for him this afternoon. She told for the third time a story relating to their maternal great-grandmother, the only point of which was to bring out the fact that this ancestress had been the daughter of a peddler.

Mr. Willoughby took pains to correct her on this head, however. The father of the relative in question was a farmer, who sold his produce in the markets—a circumstance that he himself had almost forgotten, and which in those primitive days went for nothing.

On the whole, it was a great relief to all parties when this most formal of visits came to an end. From the way Mr. Willoughby bowed himself out

of that house, it was evident that he had not approved much that was said within it.

Madge did not recover from her depression until she found herself in the carriage and many blocks away from the neighborhood in which her aunt chose to reside. It was not a nice quarter of the town anyhow, and none but eccentric people would care to live there. But Mrs. Wadham Adams rather plumed herself on the fact that she remained in the locality after everybody of consequence had moved away from it. She also prided herself on her old-fashioned ways. A great many disagreeable persons have the same weakness, and they can make a virtue of doing things nobody likes, and acting in opposition to society in general.

But they had another errand to perform that afternoon which was more to Madge's fancy, and she felt she had earned the right to enjoy herself now. Lillian Thurston was coming to town, and she had planned with her help to give Emily Van Hurdle a surprise. Even Mr. Willoughby became interested in this schoolgirl plot, and was almost as excited as the chief conspirators themselves. As it turned out, the scheme worked admirably.

Emily Van Hurdle had stationed herself at a window to watch for the return of the carriage, and on its appearance she flew down to the hallway. When now she beheld not only Madge, but Lillian also standing on the threshold, her feelings were too much for her. She gave a groan, re-

treated into the house, and then, rushing forward, flung her arms impulsively around Lillian's neck. We will drop a veil over the scene that followed, and if, dear reader, you incline to laugh at it, we beg to say you have never been to Miss Withermaid's Academy.

What a pleasant party it was that sat down to dinner in the Van Hurdle household that evening! The fresh young faces had a most pleasing effect on the elders, and the way they chatted and laughed put everybody in a good humor. Mr. Willoughby was charmed with Lillian Thurston, for like Madge she too had improved at school. Her mother was his neighbor at Heathdale, and a woman whose friendship he valued. Lillian and Madge were of the same age, and had been brought up like sisters, so Mr. Willoughby felt an almost paternal interest in her now. Her manner was proud, but not repelling, and any one could see at a glance that she was a girl of the highest ideals and aspirations. "Lillian of the Haughty Face," she was called at school.

## CHAPTER III

BUT fate had decreed that Mr. Willoughby should have other things to think about now, besides the pleasures that appeal to schoolgirls, or the plans he had formed to ingratiate himself with certain persons prominent in society. Mrs. Humphrey Provost had sent him word that she needed him, and he felt sure she would monopolize his time while he remained in town. It is proof of his good nature that he did not murmur at the burdens he would be called upon to bear on her account.

Whenever Mrs. Humphrey Provost had trouble, or things got on her nerves, she sent for Mr. Willoughby to advise or cheer her, as the case required. He possessed her confidence, as nobody else did, and, it must be confessed, he paid a high price for the privilege.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost might have been the original of the first woman, who rebelled against the monotony of Eden. If she had done so she would have been eager to lay the blame of her own discontent on a serpent, or any old thing that came handy. Her most zealous champions had never claimed that she was given to acknowledging her own mistakes.

But if the reader is inclined to wonder why Mr. Willoughby was willing to make himself her pliant tool, let it suffice that Mrs. Humphrey Provost was a woman of social consequence. He had reason to know that she had the approval of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and he more than suspected that everything he was called upon to do on her account was duly reported to very nice people, and won him some praise in consequence. If any excuse is needed to account for a man ignoring his own comfort to serve a friend, what higher one could be offered than this?

If, too, he went about this business in a mysterious fashion, taking care that his niece should not know anything he was driving at, it was because Mrs. Humphrey Provost herself dealt in mysteries. In fact, she was a mystery, and some malicious persons went so far as to say that she was an adventuress in the bargain. They described her as a sort of society burglar, that is to say, a person who had broken into society without regard for the barriers it sets up for its own protection.

The reader may take our word for it, however, that her only crime consisted in the fact that she had married a man for his wealth and position. His sister had taken a great dislike to her, and was constantly stirring up people against her. Added to this, her marriage had turned out unhappily. Her husband was very dissipated, and there were frequent quarrels between them. However, it does not follow on this account that her sister-in-law,

Mrs. Saltearth, should wage war upon her so mercilessly. Many respectable people have married for the same reason, and the world thinks well of them. Even to those who enter into it with the highest motives, matrimony proves a disappointment. Once upon a time a pious man prayed for a wife, and according to his own confession the devil answered the prayer and sent him a vixen.

Prudence declared that her sister-in-law hated her for other reasons, and perhaps she was right.

Although he was a man above intrigue himself, Mr. Willoughby allowed himself to be drawn into things on this woman's account that he would not get implicated in otherwise. Whatever the motive might be that led him to make himself her tool, he hastened to obey her summons the next day after his niece's arrival, when he had satisfied himself that Madge could be left with the friends who had taken charge of her until she returned to school.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost had evidently been looking forward to his visit, and her eagerness was not lost upon him. She greeted him so warmly that he felt sure she had something for him to do. Neither did she keep him long in suspense about the business in hand. Mrs. Saltearth was making trouble, it seemed, and the situation was becoming intolerable. Prudence was very frank in explaining things. She knew her husband would let her alone so long as she did not bother him. He had his clubs and his pleasures. These latter were not of the highest order, it must be confessed. Only

recently they had patched up a truce under which they agreed to tolerate each other, and she was looking forward to a pleasant winter in town. But Mrs. Saltearth was jealous of her popularity in society, and had forced her husband to quarrel with her again. Her sister-in-law did her the injustice to assume that Prudence would not be received at all, except for the family name. That was simply ridiculous. The position Prudence held had been won by her own cleverness. Even Mr. Willoughby was willing to admit this.

Now Prudence had formed a plan to circumvent Mrs. Saltearth if she would not listen to reason. As Mr. Willoughby was quick to perceive, its general detail would keep him busy, and would cause her as little inconvenience as possible. Trust Prudence to look out for herself at all times. But then it would bring Mr. Willoughby into touch with very nice people, so he felt he ought not protest. He knew the woman he had to deal with now. She could not exist without excitement all the time, and if she conceded anything to her husband's family it would be for the sake of enjoying herself without interference from anybody.

"If that sister-in-law of mine would only let us alone we would be able to hate each other without annoyance to either of us," Prudence said, wearily. "She makes him fight me, when I have got things arranged beautifully."

Mr. Willoughby allowed her to work off her irritation in her own fashion. Experience had

taught him that this was the only plan to follow in her case.

“Why did I marry him?” Prudence burst out again. “Because I needed friends; because he had wealth and position to offer me. I am reminded of this fact enough, I am sure. What if my marriage did establish me in society? I can hold my position by my own efforts now. What right has his family to try to turn people against me? I can get along without them. Let them beware! If they tempt me too far I will speak out, so that they will rue the day they drove me to some desperate step.”

“You have a hard life of it,” Mr. Willoughby found voice to say.

“Hard! The little beast insults me all the time. He abuses me to his mistresses. He—oh, well! I must be calm! Let us talk about our plans. I shall go south after Christmas. Until I do go, I must be let alone.”

“You have promised Mrs. Saltearth you will be reasonable,” Mr. Willoughby interposed.

“So I shall, but she must be careful how she conducts herself towards me. She must stop whispering tales about me, and trying to prejudice her friends against me. Her friends are powerful, and I don’t seek their enmity. I shall go to Florida after Christmas, and later I shall sail for Europe. I shall avoid Newport. What more? I have promised to keep out of her way hereafter. But she must not say such mean things about me. I

have your consent to take Madge abroad in the spring, I believe?"

"Certainly," Mr. Willoughby hastened to say.

"Very well, then. I will be satisfied. I shall keep out of my husband's way and out of his sister's also. But they must not fight me too openly. I am dangerous when I am roused. Let them beware!"

Mr. Willoughby kept silent.

"The idea of their saying I broke the truce, because I came to New York when they happened to be here also. Am I a prisoner on parole because I married the little beast? I came to New York because I wished to come here. My affairs drew me here at this time. I shall not leave until they are settled. I am acting my part very well indeed. I am living in the same house with the man I hate, and who hates me. I keep out of his way, I am sure. I only wish he would take pains to avoid me always. Mr. Humphrey Provost has only one passion above his appetites, and that is hatred for his wife."

"I am sure you are making the best of a hard situation," Mr. Willoughby said.

"Indeed I am! Very few women would endure what I endure. I fail to see why my husband's family should fight me as they do. I dare them to lay their finger on one act of mine that compromises my position. It is they who are unreasonable."

"I believe you," Mr. Willoughby said. "I will be your champion now."

Prudence smiled at him.

"I thank you for that. With you on my side I shall feel I am in the right."

"You can always depend on me," Mr. Willoughby said. "You ought to know that I have learned to feel an admiration for the way you bear your troubles."

"Do you indeed?"

"I most certainly do. I am not afraid to show my feelings at all times."

Prudence looked up at him quickly.

"I did not know you were so fond of me," she said.

"I always admired you very much," Mr. Willoughby answered, with one of his most courteous bows.

"I am grateful for that; I thank you. You are the only person in the world I respect and admire. If I could love with the best that is in me, I believe I could love you with all my soul. But you know my waywardness. I am a frivolous, shallow-hearted woman. If I could have listened to you once upon a time—if I could have placed myself in your powers so as to feel your influence—But what is the use? What must be, must be!"

She stood in front of him now with a smile upon her face. She was a woman in all her loveliness, with a witchery in her eyes that caused even this ascetic to feel a momentary thrill. Again Mr. Willoughby bowed after the fashion of an old-time

cavalier. Mrs. Humphrey Provost held out her hand. He raised it to his lips.

"Always remember I am your champion," he said.

"More than my champion! You are my true knight, without fear and without reproach!"

Hereupon, Mr. Willoughby departed on his errand.

Of course he was forced to call on Mrs. Salt-earth, and hear her side of the story. Soon, too, he was drawn into a family quarrel that was being waged with great bitterness, and he had to make many suggestions to both parties, in order to patch up the semblance of a peace between them. This took time, but it was worth the effort. He carried his point at last, and succeeded in arranging that Mrs. Humphrey Provost should remain in New York until after Christmas, without being subjected to any further annoyance from her husband's family. Then she was to go South, and afterwards to Europe. She also renewed her pledge to keep away from Newport in any case.

Mrs. Salt-earth was very bitter against her sister-in-law. She declared that Mrs. Humphrey Provost knew what her brother was when she married him, and his family had not approved of the match. They washed their hands of her now, and would not be bothered by her. She was an adventuress, and came from nowhere. This marriage had given her a position in society, which she could not have won in any other way. As to her quarrels with

her husband, they were her own affair. If she ever dared to use Mrs. Saltearth's name to help her socially there would be trouble. It had been agreed that Mrs. Humphrey Provost was to keep out of the way of her husband's family, and here she was in New York again, going everywhere and seeking recognition from everybody. Let her go away as soon as possible, and stay away. All her husband's relatives asked was that she let them alone, and never cross their path again.

Mr. Willoughby flattered himself that he showed great tact in the way he patched up this quarrel for the time being. He also managed to advance his own interests socially ere he had settled it. Before long Mrs. Saltearth began to show an interest in him that could not fail to gratify his pride. She spoke of him feelingly to several very nice people, and he even had the satisfaction of learning that his praises had been sung in the presence of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself. On the whole the affair was a source of gratification to him, and there was no telling what it might lead to later on. Trust him to make the most of any opportunity offered at this time.

## CHAPTER IV

IF anybody were to ask Mr. Willoughby who was the greatest personage in the United States, he would answer, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

Perhaps now, he was not the only one that held to this opinion. Possibly, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself would endorse it. For she was a very remarkable woman in many respects, and had attained a certain kind of eminence as leader of an exclusive set that aims to make a profession of society. If this is not true greatness, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby did not know what it is.

For, behold, it has come to pass in this age of plutocracy, that society has risen to the dignity of a profession in America, to be taken up seriously, just as men do law or medicine. One must have talents to shine in it, and, indeed, there is call for positive genius in this field. In former times society belonged to almost anybody that was willing to pay attention to it; but now its control has passed into the hands of a few, who are able to make it their life work.

There are people, who for lack of something to do, are glad to take up with society, and devote all their energies to it.

Just how far Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was responsible for this state of things, those who have followed her career are able to judge. It must be confessed, however, that all her efforts had tended to give it a professional tone. Under her leadership society was a proper field for the over-rich to exploit their wealth and their tastes for the marvelous.

Although Mr. Willoughby was only an amateur in this great science as yet, it was the height of his ambition to write "professionally fashionable" after his name. He wished to have it enrolled among the fortunate ones, to whom new people are supposed to address their prayers. Above all, he longed to acquire the friendship of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, so that he might always count on her approval.

But to do this was a difficult matter. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had an aggravating way of letting people pass out of her memory, at the very moment when they thought themselves sure of their position. Some unfortunate beings had enjoyed the smiles of the elect for a time, and then as suddenly disappeared as if the earth had opened and swallowed them. It need not concern us to ask what became of them. Let it suffice that they passed out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

To Mr. Willoughby's way of thinking, this meant social annihilation.

But at this point the writer begs to state that only those who can appreciate social prominence are

able to grasp the full significance of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones' favor. It is a question whether her position allowed her to have friends. She very graciously permitted herself to like a few people, but it did not follow that she was particularly fond of them. Her likes and dislikes may have been determined by her social obligations.

There was nothing Mr. Willoughby dreaded more than the fear that he too might forfeit her esteem. What would it profit a man to win the whole world, and then pass out of memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones? If now he did a little tuft hunting, it was to save himself from a calamity so direful. He was a very tactful man, and a past master of the art of flattery. Nevertheless, the danger he dreaded was a real one, as it is our painful duty to relate.

He went out very early one morning, being engaged in the settlement of Mrs. Humphrey Pro-vost's affairs. This business detained him longer than he expected, so that it was late before he could return to the hotel. Then something else happened that afforded him an excuse for his absence. It was not a pleasant interruption, but it served the very desirable purpose of keeping Madge ignorant of his other plans. His niece had come to the hotel in the morning, and he had left a note for her, asking her to remain until he returned. Madge was glad to do so. It was a pleasure to be alone with her aunt at any time. She assumed that her uncle had gone out for a stroll to get a

breath of air, as his custom was when in town. She had an engagement herself that afternoon, but she was not sorry of the chance to take lunch with the invalid.

The hours slipped by, lunch time came and went, and still her uncle did not return. When three o'clock arrived Madge grew restless. What could have detained him like this? She did not dare question her aunt about any plan that might have called him away, as that would only excite her. It was four o'clock when Mr. Willoughby got back to the hotel, and she had to meet her friends at five sharp. She had made up her mind to demand an explanation for this unaccountable absence, when Mr. Willoughby volunteered the information that he had been attending a funeral.

"A funeral!" cried Madge. "Who has died lately that we know?"

Mr. Willoughby looked a little sheepish and admitted that this funeral had not been a society affair. That is to say, the deceased did not belong to the upper set. But his sister, Mrs. Wadham Adams, called for him just as he was going out for a morning stroll, and informed him of the death of a connection of the family, whom he had never heard of before, much less seen. She then requested him to accompany her to the obsequies, which she was to attend in the rôle of chief mourner, and he had felt forced to do so.

His sister had dressed in the deepest black, and shed copious tears, as if the deceased were a bosom

friend of hers; whereas she had beheld him but once in the flesh. She had also begun to form plans for the relief of the afflicted family, who were in very humble circumstances. She tried to interest her brother in these, but Mr. Willoughby had an experience with her charitable work once that caused him to come near passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and he was not to be trapped again.

A man less good-natured than Mr. Willoughby would have been furious at all this. To do the family justice, these people were only distantly connected with an obscure branch of it, that the Willoughbys proper had long since disowned. He had every reason to suspect, too, that Mrs. Wadham Adams had only taken up with them for malicious reasons.

Madge, however, took the alarm at once. She begged her uncle to be on his guard now against her aunt's wiles. She felt sure there was some mischief in the wind that might be his undoing. Mr. Willoughby needed no such warning. He knew too well that Mrs. Wadham Adams studied to belittle him in the eyes of society, and if she could have had her way he would have passed out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones long ago. He had always tried to show her by his manner toward her that he did not approve of her ideas, but of course his friends did not know the position in which he was placed, and they might not listen to his excuses. For his part, Mr. Willoughby

could not conceive how Mrs. Wadham Adams could have the face to take issue with him now. Bless my soul, his position in society was not secure yet! He was sure of Mrs. Bangup, and he was trying his best to make the most of his opportunities. For his sister to make trouble at this point would be like flying in the face of providence. There are a few things in this world that do not call for argument, but are to be accepted without question, and social position is one of them. Mr. Willoughby had no words to express his horror of all persons that would belittle it. Let them be anathema! Yea, let them pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones!

But again Madge warned him to be on his guard. She knew her aunt only too well, and declared that Mrs. Wadham Adams would make a supreme effort to humiliate him now, and the sequel proved she was right.

The very next afternoon the blow fell, and woe-ful was the effect of it.

Mr. Willoughby was taking his invalid sister out for a drive, Mrs. Bangup having placed her carriage at his disposal. The weather was fine, almost springlike, and it chanced many of his acquaintances were out on the Avenue to recognize him and give him caste. A whirl of fashion passed before his delighted vision, and the greetings he got satisfied him that society was not indifferent to him. He bowed to the Humdums, the D'Elites, the Bontons, and he was permitted

to bask in the smiles of such exalted personages as Mrs. Smartsett and Mrs. Wayinit. His manner was an indication of the standing of the different people he met now. A critical observer might have noticed that there was a great difference in the salutation he reserved for Mrs. Surething, and the one which he gave to Mrs. Muckerfellow.

And, behold, that his cup of happiness might be full to overflowing, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself appeared on the scene and recognized him publicly, so that everybody was forced to say: "Truly this person is of the elect." It was a proud moment for Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, and he had a right to feel that he was a pet of society at last.

All at once, however, a plain vehicle hove in view, and in it was seated Mrs. Wadham Adams, with one of her newly discovered relatives.

Mr. Willoughby went pale at the sight, the smile died out of his face, and he dropped back in his seat as if he had been shot.

To make matters worse, Mrs. Hotstuff's carriage happened to be passing at the moment, and he was about to make one of his most elegant bows.

It was like Mrs. Wadham Adams to show up while he was posing as a lion, and spoil everything! It was mere spite in her anyhow!

Words would fail to do justice to Mr. Willoughby's feelings, even though the writer were able to tune his song to the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah.

His sister had beaten him again, and in his mortification he determined to fly the town as soon as possible, because if this sort of thing went on, he was in danger of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

## CHAPTER V

BUT before we take leave of him, even for a brief period, we must not forget to mention the sensation Madge made in her character of the bride in "The Mistletoe Bough." The occasion for presenting her in this rôle was one of those affairs that took place in New York when the "old families" got together. Of course, the play itself was a mere schoolgirl effort, but, from the moment Madge appeared until the curtain fell, everybody was enthusiastic over her acting. Mr. Willoughby, in particular, was surprised. Bless my soul, he did not dream it was in the child! He hastened to congratulate her before the guests. He wished to let all these people see how much he appreciated her, and he could not be indifferent to the interest so many great folk were taking in her now.

The dress she wore set off a shapely figure, and in the dance scene none were so graceful as she. Every eye seemed to follow her and watch her movements. She looked stunning as the bride, and at the wedding reception her easy manners made her the centre of attraction.

But it was when she entered the garret to hide in the old trunk that her acting reached a climax.

As she stood for a moment irresolute, listening to the voices of those hunting for her, and then placed one foot in the fatal chest, her pose was worthy of a tragedy queen.

Now the lights go down, the lid of the trunk slowly descends on the unfortunate girl, and as the curtain falls the click of the lock is heard. A shudder runs through the audience, and some women weep.

“Oh, the Mistletoe Bough!  
Oh, the Mistletoe Bough!”

At the conclusion of the piece Madge was called before the curtain and fairly idolized.

Mr. Willoughby did not fail to note that the young men in particular seemed to be crazy over her; but then they belonged to such good families. Perhaps now, if he had known all that had been going on in this direction for the last few days, how Madge had suddenly grown conscious of her power to bring these unbearded youngsters to her feet, and how intense was the passion that consumed one of them on her account, he would have felt less easy about it. For the young man in question, Hamilton Bloodgood by name, was reported to be dangerous in more ways than one. Certain persons, eminently virtuous and respectable, declared he was dissipated, and they asserted this with such emphasis, that his own father had come to believe he was little better than a reprobate.

We all know how hard it is to go through life with a blasted reputation. Have we not been told that Richard III was not the villain one William Shakespeare pictured him? Nevertheless, he stands for the arch cutthroat of history, and in all probability will stand until the end of time. So, too, Hamilton Bloodgood, although nobody by comparison, had his detractors, but perhaps it would be charity to ignore them altogether.

Strange, is it not, how many men and women take delight in pointing out the foibles of their fellow mortals? They do not seem to care, either, whether they exaggerate these one bit. If now the recording angel should be minded to wipe out some scores that have been reported against their victims, doubtless these same scrupulous persons would take pains to recall the omission, and will be ready to file an objection against any mitigation of sentence, on the Judgment Day.

Perhaps Hamilton Bloodgood had done some foolish things, like many other high-spirited youths; and perhaps he had wasted many opportunities, as young men will. About the time he was sent to college it used to be taught in certain institutions of higher learning that a man could not call himself educated until he had experienced every known kind of evil well enough to recognize it at sight. Of course, there were not lacking youngsters willing to carry this idea to an extreme.

It must be confessed that Hamilton Bloodgood took very kindly to this doctrine, and was seized

with a desire to shine in circles where carousing was held in higher esteem than intellectual attainments. It is no exaggeration to say that the only taste he acquired from his university course, which could be called at all elevating, was a fancy for dogs. This clung to him for the rest of his life, and soon became a hobby with him.

Nor is there any telling to what lengths of dissipation he might not have gone if his father had not suddenly ordered him home from the haunts of the bookworm and the football player, without consulting the faculty of the college about it. But there was no harm done in this last respect, as none of the professors entered protest against the act, nor sought to recall Hamilton to classic pursuits. Indeed, it was whispered that his name had been dropped from the university register long before, and as a course in dog-ology was not appreciated by the learned dons, they were probably glad to get rid of him. It is just possible, too, that certain wild rumors had reached the ears of the elder Bloodgood, and decided him to take a hand in the game without consulting anybody. Be that as it may, Hamilton showed up at his father's house one day with as fine a pair of bull-pups as a fancier could wish to see, thereby demonstrating that he had not spent all his allowance in riotous living.

But unfortunately for him, the elder Bloodgood refused to be impressed by this striking proof of his son's devotion to a certain kind of culture. Probably he was too dense a man to appreciate

dogs anyhow; for he kicked the pups down the back stairs without ceremony, and summoned his son to a conference in the library. It was in this same room that Hamilton had been caned once, and from his father's manner now he expected no leniency. When the door had closed behind them a voice, very like the elder's, might have been heard in loud upbraiding for upward of an hour, and at the end of this period Hamilton issued forth with a very sheepish countenance. His father had spared the rod out of respect for his years, but had assured him that unless he reformed he would turn him adrift to shift for himself. Hamilton was willing to admit that his sire had reason for making these unfatherly resolutions.

But his mother was waiting to receive him when he came out of that awful presence. She went to him and kissed him effusively, just to show how much she felt for him in her motherly heart. If he wanted dogs, dogs he should have. They might wander all over the house, and he could have a rat pit in the cellar.

We shall have occasion in the course of this history to emphasize the fact, which we now make patent, that if there ever was a mother who doted on an only son, Mrs. Stuyvesant Bloodgood was the one of all others. Not only was she blind to his faults, but it was part of her creed that he was a model for other young men, and anybody skeptical on this head was sure to hear from her. How she disliked an acquaintance who had written from his

college town that Hamilton Bloodgood was a disgrace to his family; and how she snubbed another, who warned her darling boys against him! He was always the theme of her praises and the object of her fondest solicitude. If he was a little gay, it was owing to his good-natured courage. Then, too, she did not believe in these saintly boys. There were people who considered her daft on this subject, and her own sister hastened to change the conversation whenever her boy's name was introduced.

On the other hand, Mr. Stuyvesant Bloodgood was more or less indifferent to his son's welfare, unless, as in this case, something was going wrong with him. His life was regulated to the law of business and held religiously to the rule of the blessed Saint Mammon; and an indulgent rule it is for a man who venerated the sacred dollar mark. He believed he was doing his duty by his heir in making a fortune for him to inherit. Further than that, he owed him nothing.

His wife knew what to expect from him well enough. She had discovered long ago that he had but one passion in life—the desire to make money. While she never questioned his love for her, she honestly believed that this love was a secondary consideration with him. The sacred dollar mark was the symbol of his religion.

If he interfered in Hamilton's affairs now it was merely an impulse. Soon he would be washing his hands of him again. In all the little tiffs that this

couple had about their son and the mother's indulgence of him, she won, because her love for the boy was her greatest passion in life; while his was love of gold and the acquiring of it.

## CHAPTER VI

### Glory be to thee, O Money!

BUT lest we condemn this man for being a Mammon worshipper, perhaps it would be well for us to search our own hearts and ask ourselves whether we are altogether free from this same avarice. The writer makes bold to say that there are a great many people in this land of extensive liberty who have nothing in their heads but the dollar mark, and some of them stand well in society, too. The American people no longer govern themselves. Money governs them. So at least the world is saying to-day, and it has gone out to all the ends of the earth that this great continent, once the home of the free, is only the land of the almighty dollar. From Puritan to Mammonite! What an evolution is here!

Alas for the ancient chivalry of our race! Alas for its martyrs who have sacrificed their lives for humanity, and its heroes who have fought for humanity's cause! Mammon hath formulated a creed that is sure to put the old-time virtues out of practice altogether, and we do not suspect the idol

we are serving until it turns out to be a devil, and robs us of our very souls.

Was it for this our fathers settled in the wilderness; that their children should serve Mammon and him alone? Behold what a tyrant he has become to us, him whom we took for a deliverer! In his service we waste our strength, at his bidding we lose our hope of salvation. Mammon, like Moloch, delights in human sacrifice, the noblest, the choicest, at that.

The Anglo-Saxons were once a race of world conquerors. To-day they are fast becoming a race of money worshippers.

We are always boasting of our energy and parading our progress while we sacrifice our ideals; but let us try to consider for a moment what our national greatness really is. Let us begin in Wall Street, where Mammon holds high carnival, and the moral that greed teaches is right before our eyes. Let us prepare also to take part in the perpetual adoration of the Almighty Dollar.

Wall Street is a medley. Who shall judge it? It has its champions, and there are those who decry it as the source of everything that is dishonest and corruptible in finance.

Money is king here, and it is more than king. It is god, and its worshippers bow down to it as the dispenser of all joys. Here are its shrines, here are its altars. Here, too, are its ministers serving before them, offering up the golden incense and proclaiming its omnipotence. Mammon hath

been apotheosized here, and all these imposing buildings are so many temples dedicated to him.

Thus have we raised a Pantheon to the nation's gods!

For what, pray, are the pleasures money cannot buy? What are the desires Mammon cannot gratify? We only laugh at the things that have no purchasing power, and leave them to fools and dreamers!

But pause for one moment and gaze at yonder figure of Washington overlooking this babel of money changers. If that statue could speak to us with its brazen lips, might it not say: "Ye cannot serve Liberty and Mammon!"

But, here we are at the office of Stuyvesant Bloodgood, Banker and Broker. Let us enter while the spirit of this musing is still upon us, and perhaps we may catch him in the very act of paying his vows to the Saint who is patron of greed and covetousness. There is the usual six days' novena to Mammon going on there, and perhaps it may offer some lesson in the ethics of money worship.

Mark how completely he is absorbed in his task! There must be something in serving Mammon after all, else such a man would have forsaken him long ago. It must be happiness when any man can lose himself in any pursuit like this. Alas! who can tell what a load he is tied to? Perhaps he cannot pause if he would, and dare not stop to count his gains even. He who had the Midas touch learned to hate the sight of gold, and there are men living

in this place to whom fortune means slavery. They do not own their money; their money owns them, body and soul. Having millions they can never hope to spend, they suffer agony of mind for fear they may lose a little of their hoard. The dollar mark is ever before their eyes, and it has burned itself into their brains and governs all their actions. Nay, money making has well nigh become a fetish with them.

Let us hope, however, that Mr. Stuyvesant Bloodgood got some happiness out of this life of golden drudgery. He was not a bad man, as men of his stamp go. Indeed, if he only had time to think about his fellows, he was really charitably inclined. His subordinates fairly worshipped him. They had suffered themselves to be inspired with his spirit, until they had become so many machines to do his will. There was but one brain in this establishment, and that was Mr. Bloodgood's own.

It was his custom every afternoon, when the stock exchange had closed, to betake himself to a choice restaurant, where a feast might be spread for the gods themselves. Perhaps this was the reward he got for the toil of a day; for here he met his fellows of the money world, and made merry with them. They were men well in favor with themselves; men who, besides being critics in finance, were connoisseurs in gastronomy, and knew wine by its flavor. Was it not something of a sight now to behold them flinging off the cares of

a nation's business and sitting like ordinary mortals over their wine, and discussing its quality?

But on this afternoon Mr. Bloodgood remained at his desk later than usual. Everyone had left the office except Mr. Nimms, the head bookkeeper, and he, noticing how the hour of closing was past, and that his employer was looking grave and careworn, wondered mightily. He was a very odd man, this same Mr. Nimms, and was ambitious to pose as a scholar. Once upon a time he wrote a very learned article on a very learned subject, which he read before a very learned society and received a very learned title, by virtue of which he passed for a very learned man. Nevertheless, he said "I done," and made other grammatical blunders too numerous to mention. The clerks in the office made fun of him because they were sad wags and considered him a very learned humbug. But he was a very good bookkeeper in spite of these drawbacks.

Mr. Bloodgood called for a statement of Hamilton's expenses, and when it was brought to him went over each item carefully. Mr. Nimms saw an opportunity here to air an opinion—a scientific opinion—on the subject of young men and their extravagances, and he could not be expected to let it pass.

"Vices of all kinds are hereditary," he began.

This was hardly complimentary to the father of a dissolute son, but science does not deal with flattery.

"Not only are vices hereditary, but they may

be handed down for several generations without cropping out. This may be because they are denied the proper field in which to germinate, and then they spring up like thistledown that has lain dormant under winter's snows, but revives and takes root in the sunshine."

This last figure struck Mr. Nimms as very pretty, quite poetical in fact, and he stopped a moment to digest it.

"Not only are vices hereditary, but other things as well," he continued. "Take the case of my oldest son, for example. The other day he got a position in Boston and started to go there without saying a word about it. He was packing his trunk when I got home and I learned from his sister that he was going to take a train that night.

" 'Why, my son,' I sez; 'you ought to tell your mother and I of this.'

" 'Well,' he sez, 'I allus supported myself, and I guess it ain't nobody's business where I go.'

"Sure enough off he went, and to-day he is a rising man in his line.

"Now, sir, he told the truth. He allus has supported himself, and I done the same at his age, and so did his mother."

Mr. Bloodgood paid no attention to this display of erudition, although Mr. Nimms gave him opportunity to comment upon it. He figured at the account in silence, and his hand actually trembled as he toyed with the pencil. He left the office very abruptly, to the regret of Mr. Nimms, who hoped

he might draw him into an argument that would advance the cause of science. When he came home later than usual, his wife noticed how fatigued he looked, but ascribed it to his intense devotion to business.

"Aren't you going to have your wine to-day, Stuyvesant?" she asked, when they were seated at the dinner table.

The bottle old John had opened was untouched and probably old John himself would have the pleasure of emptying it when he dined later.

"I have decided to stop drinking, my dear, so as to set an example to my son."

Hamilton winced.

"I have shown him how a gentleman should use wine at his own table, and now I intend to show him how a gentleman should give it up, as a lesson to others."

Hamilton looked uncomfortable.

"The man that allows himself to become a slave to his own appetites is no man at all in my opinion."

Hamilton did not even dare to look at his father now, but kept his eyes on his plate.

But at this point the author makes his best bow, and begs to inform the reader that the story must return to Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby again.

## BOOK II

### CHAPTER I

ALL the things that happened to Miss Willoughby during her trip abroad under the chaperonage of Mrs. Humphrey Provost, the sights she saw, the people she met, would make a book in themselves if anybody chose to write it. The present biographer prefers, however, to pass them by, with the simple statement that a bright American girl is likely to hold her own, no matter where her lot may be cast.

Long before the Old World discovered her, America had learned to appreciate the cleverness of its fair daughters. We had accepted the doctrine on this side of the Atlantic that the American girl is irresistible, and it did not surprise us at all when the rest of creation woke up to the fact. Americans pride themselves on knowing a good thing when they see it.

It has been remarked that there are no gentlemen of leisure in the United States. If this is any drawback, there are enough ladies of leisure to make up for them. It is one of the boasts of our

republican system that it has produced a society in which woman is queen. In proclaiming all men equal, our fathers were too gallant to put restriction on the gentler sex, and we have accepted an unwritten law that permits them to become anything they choose. The only wonder now is that the men of America are not groaning under a tyranny worse than the one against which their fathers rebelled. If there is a privileged order in this land to-day, it is a feminine one. Everything comes to that refined autocrat, the American society woman.

However, it is only to be expected that an institution so intensely feminine as society has become, should be open to attacks on account of its petty prejudices. Even her stoutest champion will admit that it is a serious problem how to emancipate woman from her clothes. Ages ago, when humanity was created in the image of the pro-simians, some clever female discovered that the male creature likes to be henpecked, and she assured all the rest of her sex that in this lay their great opportunity.

We have made no secret of the fact that Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was the kind of a man the average woman could impose upon. Was he not eager to enroll himself among the devoted followers of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones in society? Did not Mrs. Humphrey Provost use him very much as she would an errand boy? It is now our painful duty to show how his niece, a young woman to

whom he had stood foster-parent, took it upon herself to pull wool over his eyes and twist him around her little finger. Alas, better men than he have been made to realize their helplessness in this land of petticoat despotisms!

It was while the Heathdale season was at its height, and on a pleasant day in early summer, that Madge Willoughby returned to the home of her childhood after an absence of a year or more, during which she had developed into womanhood and incidentally had acquired many of the conventionalities that are associated with the society girl. It is our privilege now to let her make a second entrance in the pages of this comedy under favorable conditions.

Her uncle was glad to welcome her. Ascetic as he was in the simple rule of life that he followed in his Arcadia, he told himself that he had everything to gain from his niece's companionship. She had received the advantages of schooling and travel. Perhaps now it remained for him to take her in hand and mould her character to his conception of the Willoughby ideal. If he could do this, he felt that he might challenge the world to beat her.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby believed in family pride, as we have been at some pains to show. To his thinking it stood for the highest kind of refinement. He believed in his Huguenot ancestry and he believed in the old-fashioned virtues that he had inherited with it. His ambition for Madge was that she might turn out a Willoughby of

Willoughbys, in accordance with the family tradition.

Further than this, he believed in those social standards which he associated with the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

He was aware that there is a difference between a mere schoolgirl and a young lady ready to enter society. He cautioned himself not to be too severe with her, even while he sought to give her the benefit of a Willoughby example. Neither could he be insensible to the fact that she had developed into a beautiful woman.

It was a new experience for Mr. Willoughby to have so fair a creature sitting at his table and sharing his simple bachelor fare, as he had lived like an anchorite, with nobody but his invalid sister to keep him company. He began now to recall the days of his youth, and the elegance of manner that was practiced in old-fashioned drawing-rooms, when belles and beaux appreciated gallantry. He was on his best deportment, and ever ready with his most formal bow.

Alas, poor man! Wrapped in the contemplation of the Willoughby beatitudes, eager to merit the approval of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones for all his smallest actions, how was he to know what to expect from this daughter of the moderns? He would never imagine that in this girl of his own blood a large amount of dross could get mixed with the ancestral metal of her character, without being detected by him until it was too late. He did not

understand the mad vagaries, the unexpected manifestations of the nature feminine, that have foiled cleverer men than he. Therefore he rushed to his fate.

He was pleased to see that Madge was glad to get home again. In her enthusiasm she raved over the old place, and declared it was a paradise in which she would be only too happy to live forever. Neither can it be denied that she was much impressed with her uncle. She had been too young to appreciate him when she went away to school, but in the course of her experiences since she had learned to value his refinements. She decided now that he appeared to good advantage here in Heathdale, and that the old manor was a proper setting to his dignity. He seemed to her not unlike some rare antique matched by these surroundings. There was something that excited her admiration in the way he ushered her into the dining-room and seated her at the table when she was to partake of her first meal in the old home. Evidently her future was in his hands.

Madge's prattle was about the glorious time she had had roaming in the capitals of Europe. She presided very charmingly over the coffee urn; for it was midday, and luncheon had just been announced when she arrived.

"But tell me, Uncle Roosevelt, why are you and Mrs. Humphrey Provost so distant to each other? I could not get her to come up here with me. She

said she was not worthy to remain under the same roof with you."

Mr. Willoughby looked up surprised at this remark.

"I was not aware that we were distant to one another," he answered simply.

"But you are. The moment you meet you are as stiff as martinets. And yet I really think she worships the ground you tread on."

"Does she indeed!"

"Oh, my, yes! The only time I have ever seen her really moved is when she talks about you. It takes a great deal to move Mrs. Humphrey Pro-vost, I can tell you."

"We are very good friends," Mr. Willoughby said.

"How long have you known her?" Madge asked.

Mr. Willoughby looked grave.

"Forever, I think."

"Did you know her before her first marriage?"

"Her husband was my dearest friend. He died in my presence, and asked me to protect his widow. May I trouble you for another cup of coffee?"

"Oh, that is it, is it?" Madge said. "Then there is no secret between you? I feared there was."

"There is only the memory of her past sorrow between us. She has been made to suffer keenly by the fault of others. She is grateful to me be-

cause I have been her friend and have appreciated the delicacy of her position. That is all."

"How did she ever come to marry her present husband?" Madge asked again. "The sight of that man makes me shudder. He is the coarsest, grossest creature I know."

"She was supposed to have made a brilliant match when she married him," Mr. Willoughby answered.

"I hope she did. There ought to be some compensation for a woman that married such a little beast. If I had done so, I would have gotten a divorce long ago."

Mr. Willoughby was pained at this outburst. The Willoughbys prided themselves that there had never been a divorce in their family.

"I trust, Uncle Roosevelt, you and I are never going to have a quarrel," Madge said, by way of starting up the conversation again.

If Mr. Willoughby was a little startled by this remark, he had the good taste not to show it.

"I am sure we never shall, my child. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing, only I fancy you would be a hard one to make up with afterward. I like quarrels when there is making up afterward, but when there is not they are horrid."

Mr. Willoughby's consternation began to betray itself in spite of him.

"Mrs. Humphrey Provost and I quarreled all the time, but we made up afterward. She said

I was trying to get all the men away from her, but of course I wasn't."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Willoughby dropped his knife and fork, and stared at his niece in dismay. Here was a pretty state of affairs! Here was a revelation of the feminine that did not tally with Willoughby conceptions and defied the standard set up by Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones!

"I was right, of course, every time, but she would not acknowledge it at first. It would have been just as well if she had, though, because she was forced to acknowledge it in the end."

Mr. Willoughby gasped. Here he had been congratulating himself that this girl was a Willoughby of Willoughbys! Here he had almost allowed himself to fall under the charm of her manner! Quarrelling a pleasure indeed! If Mr. Willoughby were to indulge such tastes, why—bless my soul—he would be sure to pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones!

"Hem! I did not know that ladies of good family did such things," he said icily.

"Oh, that is nothing. Ladies do lots of things nowadays that were not considered proper once upon a time. Didn't you ever quarrel, just for the fun of the thing?"

"Most certainly not!"

"Well, I am glad you told me. Quarrelling is an art, and like every art it has to be understood in order to be appreciated. You don't understand

it evidently, and would be likely to take it seriously."

"I most certainly should," Mr. Willoughby answered.

He was a little dazed now. It had never occurred to him that anyone would question his standards, but he began to think that this niece of his was laughing at them. Just fancy anybody not caring for the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones! Fancy people indifferent whether they passed out of her memory or not! Bless my soul! What is the world coming to in these days?

On second thought, however, he was better pleased that she had been so frank with him. He fancied he liked frankness in a woman. She certainly was honest in telling him her faults. Now he understood how to handle her, in order to raise her ideas to the Willoughby standard.

If he had noted the expression that came into his niece's eyes even as she spoke, he would have taken the alarm at once.

But a man whose mind is fixed on winning the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones cannot be expected to bother himself about such a trifle.

## CHAPTER II

IT was a pleasant sight to behold Mr. Willoughby walking about his paternal acres with the air of monarch of all he surveyed, and for the next few days after her return home, Madge found amusement in watching him. No lord of domain could assume a loftier bearing, and he looked every inch the country gentleman of the old school. There was something about his appearance at such moments that revealed the spirit of benevolence. Nothing, it seemed to proclaim, would please him more than to succor the needy and protect the innocent, or be a benefactor to all who journeyed within his gates. He carried a gold-headed cane on these rambles and was constantly poking it into hedges and garden patches from mere force of habit. He seemed to believe that things would grow better because he gave them the light of his countenance. A man might be perfectly happy in this Arcadia, he told himself; that is, if he were sure of the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones and were not haunted by the fear of passing out of her memory.

He was much attached to this old place, around which so many past associations gathered. The

first Willoughby who came to America settled in this spot and built a dwelling here for his race. If those old walls could speak, what a tale they might unfold! For, never since Israel moved his tents encamping over against Jericho, has such a people entered a chosen land as those palefaces who crossed the sea and suffered in the wilderness that their children might inherit the promise. They toiled for the faith that was in them, but like Moses, could only point out the road over which some Joshua was to lead the nations to liberty and a higher civilization.

Mr. Willoughby is not the only person who has made the mistake of living under the influence of the past until he has come to despise the present altogether. If the truth were known, our great-grandsires were not a whit more happy than we are: They toiled very much as we toil, suffered as we suffer, hoped as we hope. Humanity was just as sinful in their age as it is to-day, just as selfish, just as covetous, and there was just as much misery in the world in proportion to the number of inhabitants. However, it is useless to attempt to convince some people of these facts, and perhaps it might not be a kindness to do so.

In the conceit of his ancestral pride, Mr. Willoughby had come to believe that his very servants were superior to all others because they were Willoughby domestics, and he treated them accordingly. Old Hetty, his housekeeper, had succeeded her mother in the position she held. She was born

on the place, and had no other ambition except to die on it. William, the man of all work, tilled the farm to the best advantage, and as butler, presided over the pantry. On a pleasant afternoon he was metamorphosed into a coachman, and drove his master, and sometimes his mistress too, about the country with great dignity of deportment. When now Mr. Willoughby attempted to introduce other servants into his establishment, these two took offense at their ways and bundled them out of doors unceremoniously. They permitted him to have a cook, but it was by mere accident that he got this concession from them.

It is another proof of an evenly balanced mind that Mr. Willoughby took a drive on an afternoon over the same route he had traversed for a number of years without a thought of changing it. But on one memorable occasion he did so, and met with an adventure he was not likely to forget.

He was passing along a lonely road near a wretched hovel, from which he heard screams and cries of distress. Looking around he beheld a drunken man beating a woman, while two dirty children stood by sobbing, thereby adding to the noise. There was a sudden poke at William's back, the carriage came to a standstill, and Mr. Willoughby called out:

“William, what's the matter there?”

“Matter, sir?” inquired the phlegmatic William, opening his eyes.

“With that woman, there?”

Whereupon William looked in the direction of the hovel and took in the situation.

"Husband's beatin' her, sir," was his terse summary of the affair.

"Stop him at once!" Mr. Willoughby cried, in great indignation.

Like an obedient servant William promptly rolled himself off his seat, and advanced on the man. He snatched his club away and knocked him down and shook him, while his master looked on approvingly. Finally, he kicked him into a corner, where he lay in a drunken stupor.

The woman and children stood aghast at the sight, but when Mr. Willoughby beckoned to them, they came forward blubbering. He looked at them in dismay, his face fluctuating between pity and loathing. They were the dirtiest, raggedest objects he had ever beheld.

"Bless my soul!"

He motioned them to stand where they were and they obeyed, still blubbering.

William now approached, touching his hat, to await further orders, and in his helplessness his master turned to him.

"William, can't something be done? Something must be done! The authorities ought not allow this sort of thing! It is monstrous! It is barbarous! Find out who they are."

William asked the woman a few questions which his master could not hear, and then came forward

again to announce that the man was a worthless character, and spent all his money for drink.

"But something must be done, you know!" protested Mr. Willoughby. "They are human beings, and ought not to live like this. Can't the authorities do something?"

William shook his head, and Mr. Willoughby looked vexed for a moment, and then he seemed to make a sudden resolution.

"You may tell the woman to come nearer. I will speak to her."

Agreeable to this summons, the wretched creature approached the carriage, her children clinging to her skirts. They had stopped crying, and were quite awestruck. Mr. Willoughby was a little staggered by the sight, but he mastered his feelings by an effort.

"Better not give her any money, sir," whispered William. "Her husband will get it away from her and spend it for drink."

"Bless my soul! You are quite right. Madam—my good woman—William, ask her if something can't be done?"

"Better let her call at the house, sir, for something to eat and wear."

"The very thing! Tell her to call at once, and you may drive me home immediately," Mr. Willoughby said again, still addressing William, however, although he might as well have spoken to the woman herself, as she was within hearing;

but he seemed to think he must communicate with her through a third party.

William gave the woman a few directions, mounted to his perch and drove homeward, while his master threw himself back on the seat, and did not change his position for the rest of the drive.

Perhaps he was planning what he would do for the wretched creature whom chance had thrown in his way. His face wore the blank expression peculiar to it when he was greatly moved.

That evening there was a council of war in Mr. Willoughby's kitchen, to debate the propriety of allowing the woman to reside in a cottage on the estate, which had long been vacant. Old Hetty had to be heard of course, and grumbled not a little; but when she discovered that the proposed tenant could do the family cooking, in place of a hussy she had long wanted to get rid of, she relented.

But now a new danger arose. The drunken husband, what might he not do? Fortunately, William was a man full of expedients, and at this juncture he came forward again and had him arrested, and he died in a hospital in a fit of delirium tremens. But before this Mr. Willoughby had so far won him by his kindness that the wretched man sent for him in a fit of remorse, and entrusted to him the sad story of his wasted life, its failures, and its shames. He had been a gentleman before drink got the better of him, and when Mr. Willoughby discovered his name he was glad he had run across him under any circumstances.

## CHAPTER III

IN Mr. Willoughby's estimation there were just two kinds of people in the world: those who would pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and those who might hope to win her favor. Most residents of Heathdale belonged to the former class, and these he was careful to avoid. But there were a few persons in the place that had taken up society professionally, and bade fair to get on in it. With these he always maintained the friendliest relations, and now that Madge had returned home for good and all it occurred to him that he should accept the social opportunities that such acquaintances offered, lest his niece find his humdrum manner of living too tame. A young girl like her must have excitement, he told himself, and it was a comforting thought that he could choose her friends for her. Consequently, when Mrs. Cadwallader Mansfield gave a ball to the élite of the place, Mr. Willoughby did not ignore the invitation that came to him.

"You can't get out of it this time, Willoughby," Mr. Mansfield himself said, when he called one evening to inquire after the health of his sister. "The young fellows are crazy over that niece of yours, and you must be there to protect them."

Mr. Mansfield was a facetious man, and must have believed that he had said something bright, because he laughed immoderately at his own remark and poked Mr. Willoughby playfully in the ribs by way of a hint that he should enjoy the joke also. The latter was willing to humor him, as he belonged to a nice family, and was related to a number of good people.

Madge went into esctasies over the affair. She threw her arms around her uncle's neck, called him an old dear, and promised she would be very good and not cause him a speck of trouble. Then she flew upstairs to tell Aunt Kate all about it, causing the poor invalid to smile at her enthusiasm. Next she got out her dresses, and her uncle was called upon to decide which one she should wear to the ball, and when he did so he got another hug, and was called an old dear again.

Now, how could so simple a man as Mr. Willoughby be expected to resist this siren? How was he to know that under this loving exterior lurked a spirit of coquetry which might yet be his undoing? She was so sweet, and kept vowing that he was the dearest man on earth. She was going to be so good, and they were going to have the nicest times together! Again he would be hugged and called a dear, until he began to believe in her as a Willoughby of Willoughbys. But for that matter, didn't Adam believe in Eve? Didn't he eat the forbidden fruit like a fool because she told him to, and get into a heap of trouble afterwards?

And haven't the sons of Adam been playing into the hands of the daughters of Eve ever since, and in all likelihood they will do so until the end of time?

No one had ever warned Mr. Willoughby that it is best to beware of a woman when she is all smiles, and he did not suspect that his niece was planning to lead him a dance that should be to her own piping.

Is it that youth is wholly mischievous, that it delights to play upon the foibles of its elders? Or can it be that there is something of the original wilfulness in every woman that impels her to discover, if she can, of what texture the sterner sex is composed? Mr. Willoughby's house had been a veritable Eden to him until Madge entered it—a woman with all her vagaries—to conspire against its peace.

She insisted on dressing up in her ball dress and made her uncle don his evening suit for the benefit of Aunt Kate. The sweet invalid sat in state, and received them as if she were holding a reception, while Old Hetty stood open-mouthed in the doorway.

Poor Aunt Kate! What a treat this was to her, whose life had been mostly pain and suffering! But she was so gentle, and so resigned under her affliction! Love for her had been the one restraining influence of Madge's childhood. It was she who stood mother to her in those trying days, and it was her teaching she listened to, and tried so hard

to follow. Madge wanted to be good for her sake, but somehow she did not always succeed. How often would she go to her in a penitent mood, and confess some naughtiness, and the gentle reproof she got was the worst of chastisement. She liked to sit by her and listen to her stories of the reward that comes to those who lead a righteous life, and when she thought of heavenly things she associated them with Aunt Kate herself.

All this related to the long ago years of her girlhood, but the memory of them seemed like yesterday. Aunt Kate's illness had embittered those days, and she could recall how gloomy the house used to be in consequence. She would wander aimlessly about, trying to conceal the grief that was eating into her heart, or stealing on tiptoe to her aunt's door, would listen at the keyhole, only to fly away with a white face, as she caught the smothered groans of the poor sufferer. Those fearful sounds, how they haunted her! At night they would be ringing in her ears as she fell asleep, and she wept bitter tears to the echo of them. She devoured the faces of the doctor and the nurse, but did not dare ask how the patient did. No one paid any attention to her, and she was very lonely.

She must have been a sullen child. She would have fights with Old Hetty about soiling a frock or getting her hair out of curl. She despised all things girlish, and was more than half a boy in her tastes. William, the man of all work, was very good to her, and used to take her about and

explain many of the things relating to his labors. Sometimes he would carry her home with him to his cottage nearby, where his wife made much of her. She was a motherly woman, and felt for the poor little orphan. She had children of her own, too, with whom Madge played. When now anything went wrong, so that one of them got to crying, William's wife would run to the rescue with a slice of bread and butter coated with sugar, which soon put matters to rights. Mr. Willoughby never knew how much his niece owed to this good soul, during a trying period of her existence.

He decided she was a strange child, and avoided her as much as possible. He heard her complained about so often that he came to think she was wholly given to mischief, and it was only the fact that she was a Willoughby which kept him from despairing of her altogether.

One day he discovered her creeping toward the parlor, which was always closed in accordance with a good old custom, and he determined to follow her and find out what she was up to now. She had laid her hand on the door-knob as he presented himself hurrying from the library, where he had just finished his afternoon nap. The child had come to have a kind of awe for him, but on this occasion she faced him unflinchingly. Mr. Willoughby was positively startled by her expression, and for a moment he stood rooted to the spot. He had seen that same look on her dead father's face, and it made him feel uncomfortable.

"Where are you going, my poor child?" he asked, quite forgetting his suspicions of her in the recollections that crowded upon him.

"To look at my father's picture." And the dark eyes, that always betrayed her feelings, flashed at him as if anticipating opposition.

But Mr. Willoughby was touched. He led the way into the parlor and pushed back the heavy curtains, so she might see better.

The child caught her breath and gazed longingly at a likeness of his brother, which Mr. Willoughby himself had had painted from a photograph, and hung there among the worthies of his race. She had looked at it many times before, when nobody knew it. She had often stolen into the parlor for this purpose, and of an evening when the room was lit up she would get off into a corner and study it until she fell asleep. Somehow that portrait seemed to talk to her.

Mr. Willoughby felt a little embarrassed as he watched her now. It occurred to him all at once perhaps he had not shown enough regard for her. She was a very strange child, very.

"Uncle, you haven't a picture of my mother."

"Bless my soul! No, my child, I have not."

"Why haven't you?"

"Bless my soul! Er—because I don't happen to, I suppose."

"Aunty says she never saw her."

"No, she never did, but I knew her very well,"

Mr. Willoughby averred, and then added: "Your father was a fine man. I was very fond of him."

Just then his eye rested on his brother's picture and it seemed to rebuke him. He was not given to sentiment, but he was moved by the memories which came to him at this moment. He kept his back towards the child and blew his nose several times.

He wished she would leave the room, but she was still gazing at the portrait. She was a very strange child—very!

## CHAPTER IV

WHEN the night of the ball came around Madge had so worked on her uncle's feelings that he was as eager for the event as she was. He soon discovered that she was not to be a burden on his hands, and made up his mind to enjoy himself a bit on his own account. For she had been seized by a young man the moment she appeared on the scene, and already had a crowd of admirers around her. As they were all members of good families, Mr. Willoughby felt easy about her and was soon ingratiating himself with the most exclusive set of the gathering.

Some of these people had only taken up society in an amateur fashion, but they had become very proficient in it. Mr. Willoughby counted ten persons present whom Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones would be forced to recognize. He felt at home at once.

He shook hands with old Mrs. Highflyer, who, although an invalid by profession, never let an affair of this kind go by her. He chatted with Mrs. Frontup, who hastened to explain to him how it happened that she was not at Newport at this moment. He also met Miss Virginia Nonesuch, whom he could claim as a cousin on his mother's

side, and who was the homeliest, and possibly the most aristocratic, person in the house at the time, and within many miles around it.

"By Jove, Willoughby, you will have to keep an eye on that niece of yours!" Mr. Mansfield said, as he approached him. "All the young fellows are crazy over her, and I don't blame them, either. Blest if I wouldn't be after her myself, if I were a young chap."

Mr. Mansfield was in fine feather this evening. He went about scattering his jokes right and left, and the way he laughed at them himself must have impressed everybody with the point of them. Mr. Willoughby smiled feebly at this remark, but Miss Virginia Nonesuch, who happened to hear it also, only glared snubby daggers.

The merriment was at its height now, and it was evident by this time that Madge was to be the belle of the evening. All the young men had proclaimed themselves her admirers, and were watching her with eager eyes. Stacey Mansfield, who as son of the hostess did the honors for his friends, had his hands full introducing them. But at this moment Madge was waltzing with Hamilton Bloodgood, so that Stacey was able to rest on his laurels awhile. By his side in all his horseyness stood young Van Hurdle, who went by the nickname of "Jockey," because he had once ridden a winner in a steeplechase. In his opinion everything that pertained to horses belonged to high art, but he knew a fine woman when he saw her.

"Well, what do you hold her at?" Stacey asked.

"A cool million at the very least," was Van Hurdle's guarded reply.

"How many seasons will you give her?"

"Not more than two."

"I'll go you a hundred even she wins out in one."

"I won't take you," said the cautious Van Hurdle.

Then they both eyed Madge, as if she were a trotter entered for a race.

"Do you think Bloodgood will get her?"

Van Hurdle shook his head.

"Too young. Old party with riches preferred."

At this moment Stacey was called away by his social duties.

What a queen a woman can be, if only a few men do homage to her! She will rule them like a tyrant, and humor them like a slave. She will give them just enough encouragement to keep them dangling in her train. She will be whimsical, fickle, even heartless at times, but they will continue to worship her, like blind devotees.

Madge may have been inexperienced at the art of flirtation, but she was none the less a success at it. Many acknowledged belles were dismayed to find themselves deserted for this new beauty; and it only increased their chagrin because she came there unheralded. Many fond mammas, too, cast envious glances at her, venturing the remark that she was forward for such a chit, and they encour-

aged their daughters to pit themselves against this upstart, who was carrying everything before her.

Mr. Willoughby did not notice these things, but others did. In particular Miss Virginia Nonesuch took umbrage at them. To say that they offended her would be putting it too mild. All the pride of the Nonesuches was concentrated in her snubby countenance, and she glanced at the enraged matrons with snubbiest defiance. She rejoiced at the discomfiture of the other belles, who had regarded themselves as invincible, and felt proud of Madge for dethroning them. She spoke very civilly of her to Mr. Willoughby.

He was charmed by this proof of favor; for if Miss Virginia had expressed her approval of the President of the United States, he believed that that gentleman would have cause to feel highly honored. Mr. Willoughby had great regard for her, in spite of her distant manners, and desired her friendship.

Alas! his satisfaction was short-lived, however. Madge had grown weary of her triumphs and was beginning to flirt in real earnest. At this very moment she turned her back on Hamilton Bloodgood, and accepted for a partner a young man who, according to her uncle's code, was nobody at all.

Mr. Willoughby could scarcely believe his eyes, and anybody that understood the situation would be forced to pity him. This was his niece's introduction to Heathdale society, and she ought to try to make a good impression, instead of defying

it in this fashion. If she did not care on her own account, she ought to consider him. So he reasoned, and his face took on the blank expression which it assumed whenever he was greatly moved.

He had just started to pay his respects to Mrs. Bloodgood herself, and he felt as if he had never been placed in a position more painfully embarrassing. But he was too well bred a man to show his consternation, and he talked to Mrs. Bloodgood now with an icy dignity that held her attention in spite of herself.

But Madge's conduct was beginning to excite attention, and it was plainly his duty to interfere. She swept by her former admirers with haughty disdain, and looked indifferent scorn at the people who were staring at her.

Even Miss Virginia Nonesuch felt she had made a mistake, although she still cast snubby glances of approval at her. For she was not going to stand the insolent elation of the elder ladies at this point. But she made up her mind then and there she would not interest herself in the girl after all.

Although outwardly calm and collected, Mr. Willoughby, poor man, was on pins and needles. Something had to be done, and that quickly. His only fear was lest he betray his feelings to everybody.

He tore himself away from the exclusive people with whom he had been conversing so pleasantly, and started toward his niece in no happy frame of mind. Fortunately, Tom Allers anticipated him.

He had succeeded in getting Madge for a waltz, and at its conclusion he led her to his wife.

Hereupon a remarkable thing happened. His brother Jack had taken no part in the evening's amusement, but stood around very much like a wallflower. Now he suddenly braced himself, and became Madge's partner for a succession of dances, shutting out all rivals. The surprising part of it was that she seemed to like him and stopped flirting altogether.

Mr. Willoughby went back to his friends with an easy conscience, and endeavored to show them by his icy politeness that he had not been one bit put out, and their excitement was uncalled for.

The remainder of the evening passed without incident. He took Mrs. Bigslam out to supper, and listened to her account of her family affairs. Her daughter had married the Count Von Sauerkraut of the German Legation, and of course she could not be expected to lose an opportunity to talk about the countess. Accordingly, Mr. Willoughby was entertained with a description of the Von Sauerkraut castle on the Rhine, in which delightful recreation he passed his time until carriages were called.

When, however, he had Madge safely deposited in the family vehicle and away from the scene of danger, he determined to show her what his feelings were with regard to her conduct.

Now it was a peculiarity of his that he endeavored to impress people not so much by talking

to them, as by his manner toward them. In particular, when he was put out by anything, he had a way of betraying it by the stiffness he could throw into one of his bows. There was something eloquent in them beyond the power of words, if one only took pains to study them, because he had learned to express so much in this way.

Consequently, the drive homeward passed in silence. But when he handed Madge out of that carriage and ushered her into the house, there was a whole lecture in his manner. She might have known from his frigid courtesy how displeased he was. She might have read volumes of reproof in it that tongue did not care to utter. We speak advisedly, because she had evidently steeled herself against him.

He held her hand an instant, dropped it with a reproachful salutation, and turned away.

The moment Madge reached her room she threw herself on the couch, buried her face in the pillow, and gave way to laughter.

## CHAPTER V

MR. WILLOUGHBY arose later than usual the next morning, and when he reached the dining-room he found his niece had not put in an appearance. He felt the dissipation of the previous evening, but his depression of spirits was owing to another cause. He had discovered that Madge was wilful and disposed to make trouble for him. Flirting was a thing he had never expected to see a member of his family indulge in. He was sure that in his youth no young lady would encourage the attentions of men, and except that he had seen it with his own eyes he would not have believed his niece would.

Just fancy anybody defying society like this! Fancy any one deliberately doing things that would cause a man to pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones! Bless my soul, what are we coming to in these days?

His chop was almost cold when Madge came downstairs, looking as fresh as she had the evening before. The excitement had not weighed on her, and she must have slept with an easy conscience.

Her bright manner and cheery greeting fell on

dull ears, however. Her uncle was an automaton of bows at sight of her, and if she had been a stranger to him he could not have been more ceremonious when he handed her to the table. Nevertheless, there was nothing in his bearing to betray the fact that breakfast had been waiting.

Madge was prepared for an outburst on his part, and felt that all this dumbshow was only a preliminary to it. She had thrown down the gauntlet by her conduct at the ball, but she did not feel called upon now to commence the action.

The meal that followed was marked by a display of formalities on both sides, and while Mr. Willoughby's deportment was above criticism, every move he made was as carefully studied as if he were acting it for a purpose. When he asked for more sugar in his coffee, it was done in such a way as would be most likely to convince her there was more he might say, and when he helped her to butter his silence was golden. The bow he gave her as she looked at him for a moment, meant so much she must have felt its full significance. He was satisfied in his own mind that he was conveying his sentiments to her by a kind of mental telegraphy.

Neither was he far from wrong in his deductions, and if he had only spoken right out now there is no telling what he might have accomplished. But from this point forward he began to lose ground.

As Madge casually looked over the field from her position behind the coffee pot her quick woman

wit was not long in discovering that the power which had looked so formidable had many points where it could be attacked to advantage. Soon she had assured herself that her uncle's forces were unwieldy, and that it only required a tearing away of this thin veneer of decorum, and the fighting would be all her own way.

Realizing that he was on delicate ground, Mr. Willoughby watched his opportunity to crush the enemy at one fell swoop. It came when she signified that she was finished breakfast, and he arose to open the door for her to pass out of the room. At this point he made his grand coup, and he was the punctilio of etiquette as he did so. He staked everything on one last bow, and a very clever move this was—the most Willoughby-like thing he had ever attempted.

Unfortunately, Old Hetty was just entering the room bearing a tray on which was arranged Aunt Kate's breakfast. She almost dropped it at the sight she beheld; for she got the full benefit of that bow, and, except she was a Willoughby servant, it is doubtful whether she would have been able to survive it. But hers not to make outcry, hers but to cook and fry, so she managed to control herself by an effort.

Madge ran to her at once, seized the tray, and started upstairs with it.

Mr. Willoughby collapsed.

She was laughing softly, and her face still wore a smiling expression as she entered the room with

her burden. At the sight of her aunt, however, she became grave again. She set the dishes down near the bed, stooped, and kissed the invalid almost reverently.

"Oh, Aunt Kate, you ought to have been to the ball. It was too gay for anything, and I acted like a perfect flyaway."

"Oh, no, you didn't, dear," came the answer in gentle rebuke, as near as she could come to rebuking anybody.

"Yes, I did," Madge declared, saucily. "Uncle was beside himself. I could scarcely keep from laughing at him. Do you know, auntie, I just love to tease that man!"

"But you must not have such thoughts, my child! They are not Christian."

"Oh, my precious, dear auntie!" Madge cried, throwing her arms impulsively about the invalid and kissing her, "I wish I were as good as you are, but I can't help acting as I do. Uncle takes everything to heart so! You would have died laughing if you had seen him!"

She glanced roguishly at the calm, patient face, her eyes sparkling with merriment.

It was at such moments that Madge Willoughby looked her best, and her beauty would have elicited praise from the most sceptical. It did not come from repose, but from animation. It seemed to be lying hid in those lustrous eyes, until called forth by some emotion to play over her features, spreading like ripples in a pool.

Aunt Kate stroked the dark-brown tresses with her thin white hand, and looked appealingly into her niece's face, as she drew her toward her and kissed her full on the lips. What a picture they formed, this contrast of blooming youth and suffering age! It was health and hope and beauty sympathizing with infirmity and pain.

"Oh, Aunt Kate, I wish you would get well!"

"That can never be, my child. It is not the Lord's will, and I must bear my affliction until His good time of deliverance."

A softer expression seemed to steal over Madge's face at this moment, and her beauty was transcendentalized by it.

"But you are not so weak as you used to be!"

"No, dear. I feel stronger and suffer less. I give God praise for it every day, and you must, too, my child."

Madge looked very sober now. She seemed touched, almost tender, and her manner toward the invalid was all gentleness. She helped dress her and put her in the chair in which she was wont to go about. William came and carried it down-stairs, while she hovered near with pillow and shawl. A smile would steal over that face marked with suffering, as the young girl chatted so brightly. She was the poor invalid's joy, and her greatest comfort. How she had been missed during all these years, and how eagerly her home-coming had been looked for! Now it seemed as if the patient

sufferer had found a new spirit to brighten her life, so full of pain.

Madge wheeled the chair out into the garden, pointing out to Aunt Kate the flowers which were blooming on every hand. The vigor of the season affected the invalid favorably and seemed to have imparted some of its own vitality to her; so that she was able to take a keener interest in everything these pleasant days.

For, is it not true that the woods and fields do not appeal to us in vain, when they wake from their winter lethargy and deck themselves in their verdancy? We watch the opening blossoms with thankful hearts, and in them learn the lesson of hope. We see the little flower growing by the roadside, and take courage from it. We note the foliage of the forest trees, and own there is some trace of the old Eden left in us still. How rare a thing is beauty in any form, and how precious is the lesson that Nature teaches us through it! There is hope because there is the springtime. There is the realization of that hope because there is summer and the harvest season; and there must be faith, else none of these things could be.

“See, auntie, here is such a pretty flower! I am going to pluck it for you.”

The invalid smiled as she breathed its fragrance, and placed it in her bosom.

“Thank you, my child,” she said, and her voice sounded so sweet that Madge was forced to stoop down and kiss her then and there.

Lillian Thurston came in later. She had many things to tell Madge in the shape of compliments her appearance had elicited at the ball, but waited until Aunt Kate had retired to take a nap, and then the two girls could chat cosily together. Lillian had overheard some of them herself, and some she got from others; but Madge did not reject any of them, even though they came second-hand.

"Oh, Lill, wasn't it a lark, though!" she cried, laying her head on her friend's shoulder, and fairly dancing up and down in glee.

Lillian of the Haughty Face thought it was. She enjoyed seeing Madge admired, because in her eyes she was all that is perfect. These two had been near neighbors since childhood, and had grown up to regard themselves as foster-sisters. Lillian of the Haughty Face was very refined, very well-bred, proud and distant in her manner, and devoted to Madge, whom she had learned to love from the first time they played together. There were plenty of people who thought her overbearing, but Madge, who read her heart, thought differently.

Lillian was also able to tell her many things about Heathdale society, to which she was a stranger as yet. In particular she spoke about a club all the young men belonged to, and which had a bad reputation in some quarters. Rumor declared that the most frightful orgies took place within its cloistered walls, and many mammas shuddered when their daughters were invited to it for

a dance. Lillian further declared that Heathdale was an old-fogied sort of a place, and the people were staid and finnicky.

Madge listened with deep interest to all this, and it was evident that she would like to know more about this same club and its members.

Lillian remained to dinner, and was made welcome by Mr. Willoughby, who admired her greatly, and was only too glad to have her with his niece. He inquired after her mother with his usual considerateness, and announced his intention of calling on her shortly.

In the evening the Allerses dropped in, and later Hamilton Bloodgood called. If Madge was asking herself what brought him there, she was none the less pleased with his visit. She cast many triumphant glances at Lillian during the course of the evening, and the dark eyes seemed to pour forth a dazzling effulgence of beauty.

## CHAPTER VI

IT would be useless to deny that Hamilton Bloodgood was in love, because the fact was known to all Heathdale, and it was common talk at the gatherings of the Mercury Club, where the young men of the place met together. And now that he had fallen into Cupid's snare, it is safe to assume that a higher ambition than dogs could furnish had entered his sporting soul. It is just possible, however, that the object of his affections took on the form of a bull-pup in his imagination, in order to attain to his ideals. No one had ever told him that such animals were not to be associated with the tenderest emotions of the heart, and until he was convinced to the contrary, he was likely to hold to his own opinion in the matter. One night he dreamed that he saw Madge attending a rat-killing, and straightway he acknowledged that he loved her better than he knew.

A great many of his friends were inclined to take the affair facetiously at first, and accordingly Hamilton was made the butt of witticisms among the philosophers of the Mercury Club, who were not the kind of youngsters to let such proceedings pass without comment, particularly when they

affected one of their own number, whose weaknesses were well known.

"If Hammy takes my advice," said Charley Poindexter, the cynic and oracle of the club, "he will stand some show with the girl. I have told him to read a few novels and a poet or two. The maiden has some soul and a proper idea of sentiment. But if he goes in for dogs and rat-baiting, I will give any man odds he doesn't get her."

The standard which these young philosophers had set up for themselves was decidedly antimatrimonial. It did not require any deep penetration on their part to appreciate the fact that it costs something to keep a carriage, and that a palace on Fifth Avenue comes high also. Of course, if a man must marry, there is no law against it; but this kind of argument had found no advocates among them as yet, and would be likely to meet with disfavor. Dick Twaddleby, who because he was a wag, felt privileged to joke on the most solemn subjects, had laid it down as a rule that it is just as easy to love a rich girl as a poor one.

"Hammie's luck is just like mine, though," he admitted. "Whenever I make an impression on a maid, she is sure to be penniless."

"How about that darling you were rushing last winter?" Charley Poindexter asked at this point.

Poindexter had a habit of staring out of one of the club windows at a bit of scenery directly in front of his nose, and he did not take his eye off it as he spoke. He had been studying this same

view for a number of seasons, as if he expected it to undergo a metamorphosis at any moment, and did not wish to miss the sight. He was never known to gaze at another landscape in all Heathdale, although there were some very fine ones in the locality.

"How about that darling you were rushing last winter?" he asked. "She had money enough, I am sure. I am afraid you are fickle, Richard, with all your avarice."

"That affair hasn't come to a head yet. I am doing the indifferent act just now and studying to appear unfeeling. I want her to go to papa with tears in her eyes, and ask him to do something for her Richard."

"Good idea that!" another philosopher interposed. "Love in a cottage doesn't pay in these latter days."

"Love in a cottage!" repeated Richard in dismay. "Dear boy, the man who said that had his eye on a cottage at Newport!"

"Well, my wag," Poindexter said again, still watching his view, "we expect you to redeem the reputation of this club by marrying an heiress. But when is your fate going to appear, and what is she likely to be?"

"Can't say, dear boy. Fates are not made to order. If they were I would marry to-morrow."

Poindexter was studying his view very critically now, and he seemed in a kind of reverie when he remarked half absently:

"It takes something to catch an heiress, Richard, my wag. Those fellows across the pond offer them titles, and at present they are having a monopoly of the business. I am afraid you will have to find some substitute for the title, if you are going to play against them."

"Dear boy, that's too easy. I can offer an empty pocketbook capable of holding all of papa's ducats. That's the next best thing to a title, because it usually goes along with it."

"Right you are, Richard!" Stacey Mansfield said, without so much as looking up from the billiard table, at which he was busy scoring fancy carroms.

Most of these young men were city-bred, and were possessed of city prejudices. In their opinion the United States was bounded on the north by the Harlem River, and was otherwise limited to the Island of Manhattan alone. When now they passed beyond these boundaries, even to tarry as nearby as Heathdale, they regarded themselves as exiles banished to a far country, whose habits and institutions they were in nowise bound to respect.

Here they settled themselves for the summer season in the enjoyment of such luxuries as they were able to get, and possibly they hoped in this way to recover from the effects of their winter dissipations. These had consisted for the most part of sitting in a club window and staring at the people on the street for the better half of the afternoon and evening. Some of them even carried the fierce pursuit of health to the extreme of in-



dulging in golf and polo playing, but most of them preferred to pass the time in the same fashion they did in their quarters in town, and would sit by the hour in the clubhouse, indifferent to the attractions of nature without.

To this element belonged the cynics of the club, and Charley Poindexter was their mouthpiece. It was their custom to meet together and discuss the newspapers, and yawn in concert, under the impression that they were enjoying themselves. Sometimes they got into a bored argument on a bored subject, which was only dropped when the culminating point of boredom had been reached.

Occasionally, however, the club went in for a little social excitement. When some of their friends happened to be in the neighborhood they threw the clubhouse open to the natives, who were supposed to come in full war-paint, and not feel offended at the indifference of their hosts.

Anyone inclined to be critical of these young men need but watch them in town during business hours in order to appreciate the fact that they were not always idlers. It was only when the labor of the day was ended that they lounged into the Mercury Club, and assumed an air of innocuous desuetude, like men of leisure whose time was heavy on their hands.

## CHAPTER VII

HAMILTON BLOODGOOD's infatuation was a topic likely to interest such philosophers in retirement, and accordingly the exiles did full justice to it. As the gravity of the situation dawned upon them, however, they stopped joking about it, and almost every man of them hastened to give Hamilton advice in the matter.

It was no common thing now for one of them to get him off into a corner and insinuate in the most delicate way that he had an infallible rule whereby woman could be won. This man had an experience that turned out bad, and he only wished to speak a word of warning. He would have won, he devoutly believed, if he had not done so-and-so. Don't make desperate love to her on the start. Women don't like it. Jolly her a little.

Another had been successful, it seemed. He had gained the favor of a footlight queen, about whom half the town was crazy. Follow his advice, and you are a sure winner. Try the indifferent act, and never be jealous. That fetches them every time, and in his case it did for a belle of the ballet, who was hard to please.

Still a third man, with more generosity than

experience, was willing to admit that he had never had the grand passion himself, but a sister of his had just become engaged. He would find out the trick from her, and report.

Even Charley Poindexter tore himself away from his view one afternoon, and lectured Hamilton for half an hour on the folly of dragging bull-pups into a courtship. Men like Poindexter are sure to have had experiences in this line that enable them to give good counsel to a friend.

For a time much excitement prevailed in the club on account of the affair, and it soon became evident that there were not lacking members who were willing to do Hamilton's love-making for him. As it turned out, it might have been better for him if they had.

Hamilton felt he was handicapped, all right. His father had been putting the screws on him of late, and had cut down his allowance, so that he could not shine to advantage. The elder Bloodgood could not appreciate bull-pups, and how was he likely to sympathize with his son's passion? But in spite of all he had something up his sleeve that would save him. Yet he decided to stake his chances on a dog he owned.

In Hamilton's estimation sentiment amounted to nothing unless there was something to make it good, and that was where the dog came in. It was a thoroughbred, and he was very proud of it. No woman, he reasoned, could refuse him with the pup thrown in. He planned now to give it to

Madge, provided she would take its owner along with it.

Thus it came to pass that he was making the very mistake that Poindexter had warned him against by going in for dogs.

He called on Madge one afternoon with the canine in question, and found her sitting on the lawn with her uncle and Lillian Thurston.

He thought this was a golden opportunity for that pup to captivate Madge's relative and friend for him, and thus smooth the way to matrimony, which so many swains find hard. But somehow fate was against him from the start.

Now it happened that Mr. Willoughby had a horror of dogs, and at the sight of one could scarcely suppress a shudder. Nevertheless, because the young man was his guest, and because he had great respect for his family, he managed to control his aversion long enough to greet him affably. He chose to assume that Hamilton was calling on him, and that his niece was only a secondary attraction. He asked after his mother with his usual thoughtfulness, and discussed the weather with him without bias. In Mr. Willoughby's youth it was part of every gentleman's education to learn to endure bores, and to control his feelings under all circumstances.

Madge appeared to admire the puppy, in spite of its ugly countenance. She took it up in her arms and caressed it, and straightway the heart of Hamilton Bloodgood went out to her. Such a

woman, he said to himself, would make any man happy!

In the course of the conversation that followed the dog was forgotten and allowed to wander about the place at will. Once it approached Mr. Willoughby, wagging its stump of a tail, and with great presence of mind he stooped down and patted it on the head, as if he really felt an interest in it. The garden gate was open, and to his relief the dog passed through it.

“William!” he cried to that functionary, who at the present moment was occupying the position of gardener, having dropped that of butler until dinner time. “William, you may close the gate.” This was a shrewd move on Mr. Willoughby’s part. The dog was out of the way now and could do no harm. He turned to his guest with renewed interest.

But, alas! while he was enjoying himself thus pleasantly, suddenly, and without warning, there came from the garden a scream calculated to make the blood run cold, and in a twinkling William burst upon the view, bellowing at the top of his lungs, the dog gripped to his coat-tails, and fairly sailing through the air as the man strode forward.

“Bless my soul!”

In his consternation Mr. Willoughby forgot his position as host, he forgot the polite training of his youth even, and bolted for a rustic seat, and was on top of it in a twinkling. Lillian gave a scream. Madge looked up bewildered, and everybody ex-

cept Hamilton himself seemed to have lost self-possession.

"Down, Gripjaw!" he cried.

Straightway the dog let go its hold and its sullen eye lost its fire under its master's glance. To avoid confusion Hamilton took it up in his arms.

Now William in an agitated voice told how the "dorg" was "a-diggin'" in the onion bed and when he tried to drive it away it had jumped at him.

Hamilton was amused at the man's terror, although he felt mortified. When, too, he reflected how the end of his coat-tail was the nearest thing to the dog's grasp, thus showing how the poor little pup's advances had been received, something like a smile manifested itself for an instant on his beefy countenance.

But he realized that the object of his visit had miscarried, and beat a hasty retreat.

Poindexter was right. Dogs were his undoing.

## CHAPTER VIII

IT was some time before Mr. Willoughby recovered from the mortification that this affair caused him, and ere he had done so he resolved to take such steps as should prevent a like occurrence. Dogs were to be prohibited from entering his place again, even though he had to offend a would-be guest in keeping them out. He got so worked up over this matter that he was almost led to assert himself for once in his life. Yes, bless my soul, he was going to take a firm stand now!

For, be it understood, Mr. Willoughby could assert himself under certain conditions. With the approval of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, for instance, he was not afraid to express an opinion on any subject. But in this case he was not likely to take extreme measures, because the young man's mother was a woman of high standing in society. It would never do to offend her, dogs or no dogs.

Before he did anything he might have cause to regret, however, he decided to consult his friend, Mrs. Thurston. He had often gone to her about his domestic affairs, and always found her advice worth following. But what was his surprise to discover now that Mrs. Thurston was only waiting

for an opportunity to consult him on this very subject.

It seemed that it was the talk of Heathdale how Hamilton Bloodgood was devoting himself to Madge, and she warned him that it was his duty to interfere in such a way as to silence the gossips. She also declared that Hamilton Bloodgood was very dissipated and ought not to be admitted to the house.

"I know what I would do if it were my case," she said. "If he presumed to pay attention to my daughter, I would shut the door in his face. I only wonder his father does not realize what he is and try to reform him, but some people are blind to the faults of their own children."

Mrs. Thurston did not talk like this without reason for it. She was too well-bred a woman to slander any one. Therefore, this censure meant much, coming from her.

"But he belongs to such a good family!" Mr. Willoughby said, helplessly.

Just fancy a man who belonged to a good family being objectionable in any way!

"Nonsense!" Mrs. Thurston answered in some scorn; "that does not excuse him from being fast and having low tastes. Family, or no family, I would not allow him to call on my daughter, and I am sorry she has been introduced to him."

Mr. Willoughby began to feel very uncomfortable. The danger Mrs. Thurston had con-

jured up was greater than he supposed. Perhaps, now, he had been too lax.

"But my niece is different from most girls," he stammered. "She—she flirts, and with anybody at that!"

He looked very blank as he made this admission about a Willoughby, and it was evident that it pained him to do so.

Mrs. Thurston smiled a little, and reiterated her statement that she would like to see him paying attention to her daughter, that is all.

"I tell you, Mr. Willoughby, when young men like Hamilton Bloodgood, brought up in the best families, are allowed to indulge their wild courses, we cannot be too particular about our girls. I am thankful to say I have never asked him to my house, and I never shall. Moreover, I shall warn Lillian against him, lest she meet him elsewhere."

This last remark went home to Mr. Willoughby and made him wince. He saw it all now. He had been too thoughtless.

"Bless my soul, this is awful!"

Mr. Willoughby did not believe in love. He regarded it as a mild form of madness that young people get at times, and thought it ought to be treated like smallpox and other dread diseases. Then, too, while still under the spell of Mrs. Thurston's anxiety, he began to be very much alarmed. Visions of Hamilton Bloodgood and dogs invading his house to claim Madge forced

themselves upon him, and at the mere notion his face assumed its blankest expression.

Bless my soul! This is almost as bad as passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones!

Evidently Mrs. Thurston had something else on her mind, about which she would be glad to unburden herself, although she hesitated to broach it. But, as Mr. Willoughby seemed thoroughly aroused by this time, she plucked up courage and spoke right out.

It seemed she did not believe it had done Madge any good to go abroad with Mrs. Humphrey Provost, and she told Mr. Willoughby as much. Moreover, if it were the case of her own daughter she would stop all intercourse between her and a person of such doubtful character. It was common talk that she and her husband were not on good terms, and she encouraged the attentions of other men. Mrs. Thurston wished to be just, and she wished to respect other people's opinions. She tried to put the matter in such a light that Mr. Willoughby could not take offense at it, but she was forced to say that Mrs. Humphrey Provost was hardly the kind of a woman to be entrusted with the training of a young and guileless girl.

“Hem! Yes!”

Mr. Willoughby's manner underwent a sudden change. He always had a great respect for Mrs. Thurston's opinion, and in this instance was willing to believe she was simply prejudiced.

Poor Mrs. Thurston realized her mistake at

once, and bit her lip in her vexation. However, she swallowed her mortification and turned the conversation to the subject of Hamilton Bloodgood again, hoping to recover lost ground.

She told Mr. Willoughby what his duty was in this case, without caring whether he took offense at it or not. Madge, she declared, was like her own daughter, and she felt all a mother's interest in her. She spoke with decision because she wished her hearer to share her fears. It would be most unfortunate for the girl and for her friends, to have her interested in so depraved a person. Mrs. Thurston used the word "depraved" on her own responsibility. She did not care who his family were, nor how well connected. He was not the kind of a man to be received into good society, let others argue as they may. The only thing she found comforting in this dilemma was the fact that it had not become serious. If her own daughter were concerned in it, she would go to almost any length to stop it altogether.

Mrs. Thurston paused at this point in order to note the effect of her words, and was relieved to discover that Mr. Willoughby was alarmed again. Visions of dogs had taken possession of his thoughts once more, and he looked blander than ever. She proceeded in greater confidence.

Mr. Bloodgood was a good-looking man. All such fast men are. No doubt he could make himself very agreeable to any young lady. All such fast men can.

Now she brought forward a plan to thwart him. Mr. Willoughby must throw his home open to other young men, in the hope that among a number of admirers the objectionable one would be forgotten or thrust aside. But, to begin with, he must give a reception.

By this time Mrs. Thurston had so worked on her victim's fears that Mr. Willoughby would not have offered opposition to any proposal she might make to him. He simply wanted protection against dogs, therefore he fell in with her idea at once. To be sure, a reception was the very thing! Strange he had not thought of it before!

## CHAPTER IX

A MAN who is haunted by the fear of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, may be expected to develop some peculiarities. He may even be excused certain eccentricities of conduct, such as Mr. Willoughby undoubtedly possessed. Fortunately, Mrs. Thurston had him well in hand. She realized what he was. As long as she was there to talk to him, Mr. Willoughby would assent to everything. Once free of her influence, he would forget his promises.

She took care now to guard against this by hurrying things forward, without waiting for him to act. A reception Mr. Willoughby had consented to give, and a reception he did give not long afterwards.

Mrs. Thurston took the entire arrangements on her own shoulders, even to hiring the Casino, in which such events were usually held. The result was it became her party, although given in Mr. Willoughby's name.

Taken altogether it was a success. The Mercury Club came in a body, and, what is more noteworthy, the exiles so far unbent themselves as to lighten the duties of the hostess, which everybody remarked with wonder.

William, Mr. Willoughby's man-of-all-work, presided over a side-board, where he comported himself with dignity and with a view to his master's interests. He did not forget the part he played on this occasion to his dying day, and could give a list of the liquors he was called upon to furnish guests of the exile type.

If Mrs. Thurston had dared she would have snubbed Hamilton Bloodgood. However, she decided it would not help matters by doing this, but she was on the watch all the evening for a chance to show her antipathy for him publicly. It came at last, and in a manner that was both startling and unexpected.

He had been dangling around Madge like a man possessed; but he had too many rivals now, and soon began to show signs of jealousy. Mrs. Thurston noted this with a satisfied smile. Her plan was working admirably.

But what was it that suddenly caused her to sit bolt upright and get hot and cold by turns? Why did she change color, bite her lips, then grit her teeth together? What made her eyes flash so, and her breath come quick?

She actually beheld this man turn from a hopeless pursuit of Madge and dance with her own daughter!

She could scarcely believe her eyes. What! Lillian accepting him, after she had been warned!

However, she managed to remain calm, and watched them without betraying herself. Per-

haps she was glad of the opportunity to show Mr. Willoughby—to show everybody—how she could act in an emergency of this kind.

When the dance had ended she approached the couple, prepared to assert her authority; and she did so most emphatically.

It was like outraged Dignity turning on Slander, or Mistress Virtue gathering her chaste robes about her, and wrapping herself in her own immaculateness, to frown at Vice.

She took her daughter's hand and led her away. It was the cut direct, and everybody saw it; but the effect of it was lost on Hamilton Bloodgood.

She did not allow Lillian to leave her side after this, and in her concern for her, forgot all about her duties as hostess. But she need not have worried on this last head in the first place; for Madge, all unconscious of the plans that had been formed for her welfare, was entering into the spirit of the occasion with a hearty good will, and had soon taken the management of affairs on her own shoulders. As acknowledged belle of the evening her position was not a trying one. The best proof of her success is found in the fact that the exiles of the Mercury Club were making themselves so agreeable. If she could drag these young philosophers out of their shells, she must have abilities of a high order.

Up to this point the author has hesitated to acknowledge that the heroine of this story is a flirt, for the reason that the word has an ominous mean-

ing in the mind of the average reader. He now does so with pride. Furthermore, he begs to state that, if the American Flirt has wanted a champion all these years, behold, he has appeared at last! The present writer is ready to take up the cudgels in her favor.

Coquetry, he holds, is one of the rare accomplishments of American womanhood, the outgrowth of democracy and a vindication of the Declaration of Independence.

Not that all women should flirt, or even attempt it. On the contrary, flirts should be born, not made. It is a rare gift, this being able to sway the hearts of men at will, and not every woman possesses it. She is none the less a true woman, because she may have counterfeits of her feelings, which she feels an excuse for using upon occasion.

Mark, too, that in a free society coquetry is shield and buckler to her. Sometimes it defends her against the ardor of an objectionable suitor more effectually than a show of indifference would do, and it is a mask under which she may cloak her true nature, to its protection. She is bolder because she has faith in the weapon at hand, which she knows she can use with deadly effect. She is sincere because she acts on impulse, and people that act on impulse are always sincere. Coquetry to be real must have innocence behind it.

A flirt has nine hearts, just as a cat is said to have nine lives, but eight of these are only make-believe lives, intended to foil him who would pos-

sess the original against its owner's wishes. Many a man discovers all too late that he has been pursuing the shadow instead of the substance, and has only won the imitation, when he flattered himself he had the real article in his possession.

A flirt is an enigma and a most delightful one at that. You may study her evening after evening, you may follow her from one ball-room to another, and she is as much of an enigma as when you first met her. Sometimes, when she seems hollow and superficial, she is most sincere, and appearances with her are so deceptive a man must have his wits about him in order to know how to take her. She will give him all the sympathy he desires; for she is sure to be a woman of the tenderest susceptibilities, and she will reject his love so sweetly that he cannot be angry at her in spite of himself. She will leave him almost with tears in her eyes, and begin to smile on the next admirer before he is fairly out of sight.

A flirt can flatter a man and make him feel he is a most fascinating fellow. Neither are her powers limited to one alone. She can handle numbers, and handle them right, too. You may fill a room full of men and women and start them to talking very learnedly about the weather until they are in danger of boring each other; but let now a flirt appear, and presto! what a change comes over everybody!

There was a naturalness about Madge's coquetry which made it all the more charming because she

was unconscious of it. Her success lay in her rare sympathy. Every man that approached her felt that she appreciated him as nobody had done before, and believed that she discovered at once the things he hid from others in the spirit of modesty, but which he wanted others to find in him. Therefore he responded to her influence in a kind of self-conceit, and under the fire of her eyes and while still feeling her presence, he imagined he was desperately enamoured of her.

But was she in earnest, he was forced to ask himself afterwards. The answer came "no" from his own conviction, and in the realization that she was trying to be agreeable, he excused her. It is something to be able to make love to a man and at the same time make him feel you don't mean anything by it. Only a born flirt can do this.

Madge possessed a quick mother-wit and ready tongue. What flirt was ever lacking in either? She was always sure of herself, even when on dangerous ground. All flirts are. She could talk about love by the hour, but she never talked love itself. She was too clever for that. With her, coquetry was the pantomime of love, a most sweet comedy of it.

There were half a score of men about her at one time all the evening, each jealous of the other, and yet she managed them so skillfully they did not clash. This is the height of coquetry. It is easy enough to handle one man alone, but to keep several admirers going at the same time—this is a

different matter, and it proved she was past mistress of her art. A true flirt is open and above-board. She will practice more eagerly in a parlor with a crowd than when alone with one admirer, and subterfuge is no part of her nature.

"You are a great success this evening," Jack Allers whispered to her, as he forced his way through the circle to claim a waltz she had promised him.

"How is that?"

The dark eyes looked roguish, and she bent her head toward him so that he had a view of her neck and shoulders. Somehow the sight made him tingle, and he was suddenly tongue-tied. Her breath was on his cheek, and a soft laugh was ringing in his ears. Jack's senses fairly began to reel, and he would have been done for then and there, but that he was not the kind of a fellow to indulge in day-dreams and possessed great self-control into the bargain.

But some of her other victims were not so philosophical and were inclined to be put out by the way Jack was carrying things. They noted that when he appeared the charmer seemed to forget everybody else and turn all her attention to him.

"Hang the fellow!" muttered Jockey Van Hurdle, as he surveyed the couple over his horsey shirt-front. "I was getting along swimmingly with the girl when he stuck his oar in!"

Jockey did not often give way to his feelings like this, and it was well known that he and Jack

were the best of friends. Perhaps there was some truth in the report that had got around lately, to the effect that Jockey was turning cynic, impressed by the changes and chances of this sporting life and the uncertainty of horseflesh. Just then Mr. Willoughby loomed up on the view, and Jockey took a crack at him to relieve his feelings. He was doing the honors as host to some elderly ladies, very plain, but intensely respectable, and was giving them the full benefit of his old-fashioned courtesy.

"All that old chump knows about horses is that they have four legs," Jockey muttered to Charley Poindexter, who stood by his side. "If it were not for him a man might stand some show with that niece of his."

But Charley Poindexter was not paying the least attention to Mr. Willoughby or to Jockey Van Hurdle, either. He had no eyes for anybody but Madge. He was studying her now very much as he did a bit of scenery directly in front of his nose, when he gazed out of a certain window at the Mercury Club, and he would not have been surprised if she had turned into a fairy on the spot.

"By Jove, that girl is a stunner!" he said at length, and Charley Poindexter did not often praise a woman.

But Jockey Van Hurdle only scowled harder.

## CHAPTER X

FOR the next few days after this event a panic seemed to have broken out in the Mercury Club. At least, this is what Heathdale concluded when it beheld the exiles, usually so indifferent to its blandishments, flocking to Mr. Willoughby's house, singly and in pairs. The club-house might have been closed now for all the young men stayed there of an evening.

Heathdale mammas were scandalized. They asked themselves, with a show of irritation, what had caused this sudden exodus. Could it be that saucy chit of a niece of Willoughby, who was not to be compared to their own fair daughters? Not being able to answer this question, Heathdale mammas began to insinuate that Madge was a designing hussy, and would let a man go to any length in order to hold his favor.

Some of these unkind remarks were borne to Madge's ears, but they did not worry her at all. Trust a flirt to hold her own against the scandal-mongers. Fortunately, however, Mr. Willoughby did not hear them.

In order to appreciate the sensation that the exiles were causing, the reader must understand

that there were two factions among them. Dick Twaddleby represented the one, Charley Poindexter the other. The followers of the former advocated athletics; those of the latter suffered from an aggravated conception of bad form, and were suspected of being cynical.

Dick Twaddleby was a philosopher of the modern Epicurean school. He believed that this old world, if left to itself, would drift into salvation in the ordinary course of nature, whereas some of those people who make a virtue of saving it may be only trying to drag it out of its sphere. At one time in his career Richard passed for the best-dressed man in Harvard, and it was related of him in his undergraduate days that he would follow a tailor around and consult him with a show of deference; but the learned remarks of a member of the faculty fell on deaf ears. He was a remarkable fellow in many ways, and once he invented a new fashion in neckties that became popular.

Charley Poindexter, on the other hand, gained a following for his conservatism. He was a thorough man-about-town, and had a good club education before he joined the exiles and became interested in his view. He may have seemed something of a pessimist as compared with the mercurial Richard, but it is only fair to say that a great many honest-minded men have been suspected of being more misanthropic than Charley Poindexter.

It is only another proof of Madge's powers of fascination that she was voted by both these fac-

tions a very stunning girl and a well-groomed one in the bargain. Praise of this sort was not to be considered lightly; for the exiles were both sticklers for style and critics of form as well. But, for that matter, a flirt can wear a bit of ribbon so as to make it seem the costliest raiment.

She received them all in the most impartial fashion, and was very gracious and affable. A flirt can throw into a smile or a glance a world of significance. Her manner did not imply that she had any favorites among them, and although some of them were as clumsy as bears in a parlor, she made them feel at their ease. It is a part of every society woman's education to learn to endure bores, and flirts acquire the habit without effort.

It was almost enough to confirm the impression that prevailed in some quarters as to Madge's powers of witchery over young men, when Jockey Van Hurdle enrolled himself among her callers. For Jockey was never before known to become infatuated with anything but a horse, and his friends often told him if he would only give the same attention to books that he wasted on the turf, he would be a fair scholar. As to his conversational powers, Dick Twaddleby once remarked that it took a physician's diagnosis to find out what he thought about the weather. But perhaps Jockey understood more about the fair sex than he got credit for.

The ability to entertain must have been a Willoughby trait anyhow, because Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby laid himself out to make it agreeable

to these young men. Come to think of it, the old manor must have been built by people who were fond of this sort of thing. It opened up so well of an evening.

In accordance with the old-school notions in which he had been trained, Mr. Willoughby was assuming that the exiles came to the house to see him, and he ignored his niece as an attraction to them altogether. He proved himself a very master of etiquette in the way he handled them, and his icy politeness must have checked their ardor, even if it did not cool it. He discussed the weather with them in all its phases, and he flattered himself that he taught them a few points on the subject of manners that they would do well to heed.

All this is proof of the family heredity, because there was no common ground on which Mr. Willoughby could meet these young men. He had never had a youth of his own in their sense, and could hardly be expected to sympathize with many of their tastes. He had been too proper to indulge in frivolity of any kind, and the fact that he was born a Willoughby had a depressing effect on him. He did not wish to be severe with them, but he hoped for their families' sakes that they were not guilty of some of the things charged to them. He was not addicted to gossip, and in particular Heathdale gossip was far too plebeian for his aristocratic susceptibilities, but he had heard reports of bacchanalian revels at their club-house, of which he could not approve.

As to allowing them the run of his house—well, he was there to see that they took no liberties, and wasn't his niece a Willoughby? He was soon made sensible that his presence had the desired effect in that it checked any tendency toward levity on the young people's part. Politeness, as he understood the term, was a lost art to these youngsters. He was positively pained by their indifference to things which he thought betrayed the gentleman and proved good breeding as well. In spite of the fact that so many of them belonged to fine families, he was unable to overlook their behavior.

Moreover, he was sure that when he was one- or two-and-twenty, a well-bred young woman would not permit herself to be alone with the other sex. Her manner in the presence of the men who sought her society was always reserved, and as to her opinions, she agreed with older persons, who spoke and acted for her. The present-day familiarity rather annoyed him, and he took care to frown on it. He felt that he had a mission to perform in the case of these young people. Perhaps by his example he might be able to correct them, and even inculcate in their minds a respect for the Willoughby ideal.

But, strange to say, he scarcely had a chance to get interested in them, because the exiles suddenly ceased their visits, leaving him at a loss to account for their actions. His niece did not seem at all surprised by it, because when he asked her

for an explanation she only looked roguish, and although she answered not a word, he began to suspect that she knew more than she cared to tell. But he took care to show that the offense did not lie with him, by going out of his way to be nice to the exiles. Just fancy a Willoughby doing anything out of place on so slight a pretext!

But he did not have to wait long ere Mrs. Thurston put in an appearance to enlighten him. While her plan had been working so well she kept away, but now that something had gone wrong she appeared again.

"I see the young men have been driven away," she said, by way of introducing her subject.

Driven away indeed! This was news to Mr. Willoughby, and he was grateful to Mrs. Thurston for telling him as much. But who drove them away? He was sure he did not.

"She drove them away," Mrs. Thurston said, almost gloomily.

Mr. Willoughby stared.

Bless my soul! He had never thought of that!

"She drove them away to spite us and prove that she only cares for him."

Mr. Willoughby was startled now. Mrs. Thurston assumed a tragic air and spoke as one laboring under keen disappointment.

"Oh, my friend, it has gone too far! She cares more for him than we imagined. She is only acting a part with the others, and is carrying herself in this reckless fashion to defy everybody who

comes between her and this wretched man. She is going to show him now that she cares for nobody else."

Mrs. Thurston fairly collapsed, and she seemed on the point of crying with vexation.

"Trust me," she added; "I am a woman and I know my sex. She is wilful because she loves him."

Mr. Willoughby caught the alarm now. His face looked very blank, and he broke out into a cold perspiration.

"Bless my soul! This is awful!"

"Listen to me," Mrs. Thurston began again. "I love your niece like my own daughter. Haven't the two grown up together like sisters?"

Mr. Willoughby bowed assent. He was profoundly grateful to Mrs. Thurston for the interest she had always taken in Madge.

"I am foster-mother to her. I have shielded her in the past, and I will shield her now."

Mr. Willoughby felt relieved. She was going to do something after all. Perhaps he might find a chance to shirk all responsibility himself and put Madge in her charge. Trust him to think of himself in an emergency!

"That man shall never have her! Never!" Mrs. Thurston cried. "I will thwart him yet!"

She stamped her foot as she spoke, and she looked the defiant Amazon.

Mr. Willoughby nodded approval that was inaudible applause. He had decided already that

young men were dangerous fellows. He had not realized until Mrs. Thurston made him do so, how poor an opinion he always had of them. They were very dangerous, very!

“What do you think that man had the audacity to do? He actually danced with my daughter right before my eyes. I took pains to treat him in such a way he won’t approach her again, though.”

Mrs. Thurston spoke in accents of wrath, and Mr. Willoughby nodded approval again. She had quite convinced him, and besides, she was going to do something.

“Now, your duty in the case is——”

Mr. Willoughby’s spirits fell. She was going to make him do something after all.

“You must defeat your niece on her own ground. If she keeps the young men away from your house, you must take her where they are. You must go to the club yourself, and you must invite them to call on you.”

This was all she had to tell him, it seemed. Mr. Willoughby could not conceal his chagrin because she was not going to do anything more for him.

## CHAPTER XI

THEREFORE it befell one afternoon a few days later, that the exiles of the Mercury Club were surprised to receive a visit from Mr. Willoughby, accompanied by Madge and Jack Allers.

As this was the first time he had honored them, although he permitted his name to be placed on the membership roll, several of them began to consider whether they ought not to be polite to him; and doubtless they would have paid some attention to his party if it had not been under the escort of Jack Allers.

Fortunately, they were all in good spirits. Dick Twaddleby had been holding forth in his most facetious fashion on a subject that even philosophers could appreciate. The new-woman craze had struck Heathdale, and a club was being formed to discuss topics beyond the masculine ken. Richard was hitting it off in fine shape.

"I don't know what this new woman is driving at, and I don't believe she does herself," he was saying. "The fair sex have been leading men around by the nose all these centuries, and they are not satisfied yet. Well, women have been going in for beauty for so long, it may not be a bad idea

if they go in for a little brains. If there is anything wrong about their position in America, the men are not to blame, though. The fair sex have been given the right of way in this country to make themselves anything they choose. But these new women are awful creatures; they put on a man's collar and a man's necktie and think themselves just too devilish for anything. It makes a man smile to see how devilish they can be."

"Right you are, Richard," Stacey Mansfield said, without looking up from the billiard balls.

"One thing is certain, though," this wag went on. "Matrimony has got to suffer by it. These clever maidens can't fall in love when they discover how ordinary the lords of creation are; and won't they rage when they realize how the sterner sex has been fooling them all these years! But speaking about emancipation, I can tell them the men need that more than they do themselves. If we could only get emancipated from the spell beauty has put upon us we would perform miracles. As it is, just as we are about to attempt something great and startling, a pretty face looms up on the view and spoils everything."

"Right you are, Richard," Stacey Mansfield said again.

"How about the new heiress?" Charley Pindexter asked, without turning away from his view.

Richard sighed.

"She will be the same as ever, dear boy—just as hard to please and just as hard to get."

Why was it now that a sudden damper seemed to fall on the spirits of these philosophers when the Willoughby party entered? Mr. Willoughby felt it, although he had prepared himself not to notice it. He had promised Mrs. Thurston to be on his best manner, and he certainly tried to be. Not that he had any great faith in her plan; but having placed himself in her hands he felt bound to do as she directed. If he failed, there was the more reason why he should expect her to do something.

Besides, these young men amused him. They were so ingenuous. Their minds had not developed to the ambitions of a professionally-fashionable career. They did not pine for the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and did not know the dread of passing out of her memory. Really, it was refreshing to contemplate such good-natured simplicity!

However, these young innocents did not respond to him at all, and he concluded that an affected air of indifference toward visitors was part of club principles. He was perfectly sure that young people in his boyhood were not brought up to have such ideas. Ideas! They were not taught to have any at all, but were content to accept their family tradition and follow it.

He noted that his niece was equally indifferent to the young men, but he was prepared for this. She was Mistress Willoughby of Willoughby Manor now to those with whom she had been so

'friendly, although she gave close attention to Jack Allers and everything he said. Well, if she must have admirers, Jack Allers was about as harmless a one as she could have, her uncle thought.

No doubt it would have surprised Mr. Willoughby greatly if he could have known what a sensation his visit was creating; but the exiles were too gamey to let him see it. He did notice, however, that the young man at the billiard table eyed them very hard for an instant, and then went back to his game. Another one appeared to be absorbed in the scenery, and he did not even take the trouble to turn away from the window out of which he was studying it. Mr. Willoughby could sympathize with him because he, too, appreciated the fine views about Heathdale.

Once he suspected that Madge was amused about something; but what it was he could not for the life of him make out. He had no cue to go by in her case, and decided that young people were very eccentric nowadays, anyhow.

But how astounded he would have been if he could have witnessed the change which came over the exiles the moment he departed. A sigh went around that room, until they had all sighed singly and together, except Jockey Van Hurdle, who did not give way to emotion under any circumstances. Horses don't betray themselves.

Dick Twaddleby was the first to recover. He was too frank to attempt to conceal anything from

motives of false delicacy, so he spoke out his mind with his usual bluntness.

"It's up to us now!" he said. "That girl has balked the game and is too clever for us. We took her for an easy mark, and she has beaten us on our own ground. Indifference doesn't go any more."

"She is a thoroughbred, Richard," Jockey Van Hurdle declared, drawing his figure of speech from the turf as usual. "She is one of the flyers, and will win in a handicap."

"She can fool a man better than any maiden I ever met," Dick continued. "She is so artless, so simple, so unsophisticated, a fellow walks right into her little traps before he knows where he is at. You don't have to entertain her—she entertains you, and she understands the art of making you unburden yourself in an unguarded moment. I think she is dangerous, and would get a man in the toils ere he was aware of it. She would be a hard woman to convince you love her, and she would lead a fellow a dance if he tried to tell her so. Well, that's the advantage the fair sex have, anyhow. The men are generally the ones to act the fool in a love affair."

"Right you are, Richard!" Stacey Mansfield said, in almost tragic tones, as he manipulated the billiard balls.

All the exiles took this edifying conversation home to themselves.

"The fact is, all women ought to look alike, and all ought to be equally pretty," Richard de-

clared, speaking rather cynically for him. "Then men would be saved the folly of falling in love with them, and matches could be arranged on the dollar and cents basis to suit the spirit of this mercenary age. There isn't any sentiment nowadays. In the good old times the poets write about, things were different. They believed in romances and sentiment had a chance for itself. The world was not as big as it is now, and tastes were purer. I think if I had lived in those times I could have accomplished something."

"Yes," Charley Poindexter added, falling into the spirit of Richard's mood at once; "yes, in those simple days heiresses could be had for the asking."

Richard sighed at this and became pensive, and now nothing was heard throughout the cloistered halls of the Mercury Club but the clicking of the billiard balls, as Stacey Mansfield busied himself with them.

Meanwhile, the Willoughby party had departed, still under the escort of Jack Allers. He had shown them all over the place and pointed out the boat-house and golf-links. He was so nice that Mr. Willoughby pressed him to go home to dinner, and Jack accepted the invitation with alacrity. The object of the visit had not miscarried altogether, Mr. Willoughby decided, now that he had Jack Allers in tow, and of all men he might choose to distract Madge's thoughts from Hamilton Bloodgood, this one was the most harmless.

By this time night had set in, and Charley Poin-

dexter's vigil was ended for the day. It was his custom to watch that view of his until darkness fell upon it, and he was always reluctant to part with it. He started for the grill-room now to refresh the inner man.

Many of the crowd were hurrying in the same direction. Cocktails began to be in demand all at once, and the artist who mixed fancy decoctions for the thirsty was very busy.

Groups of exiles flitted in and out of the room where Stacey Mansfield played on stolidly, and the conversation dragged along by fits and starts, keeping company to the click of the billiard balls.

Somebody got up an argument, the gist of which was that the time is not far distant when the great American people would appreciate bad form. Somebody else remembered how a friend of his had won a maiden by abusing a rival for whom she really cared. He kept on telling lies about him, until the innocent creature believed them, and threw the other man over. From this it was inferred that there is more to the old saying, "Everything fair in love," than appears at first glance.

"Girl was not a woman, though," was Stacey's comment on the above.

This remark went unchallenged, because it was understood when Stacey had his intellect down to billiard balls he did not commit himself to rash statements.

Freddy Dissosway had an adventure once with a young lady up in the country, and had not

ceased to talk about it yet. He was telling the story now for the benefit of certain friends who had not heard it more than a score of times already.

“She was the strangest creature I ever saw,” he began.

“I am afraid you don’t use the looking-glass as much as I thought, Freddy,” one friend interposed; but the young Lothario ignored him.

“I really think she was fond of me. She was awfully clever, too. She used to quote poetry and say the brightest things. She even wanted to walk with me at night without a chaperone, by Jove!”

“You’re harmless, Freddy.”

“She used to roll up her eyes at the moon and say, ‘Oh, this is heavenly!’ and quote more poetry. I really think she wanted me to propose.”

“A simple child of nature,” was the comment of the audience.

This was in substance the tale, about which Freddy sought to throw an air of romance, and he was even suspected of trying to make a tragedy out of it.

At this point Stacey Mansfield called out from the billiard-table:

“Poindexter, I go you I make this shot.”

Charley Poindexter was gazing at himself in a large mirror that hung near his window, having digested a bird and bottle in the grill-room a few minutes before. There was a slight frown on his face, indicating that the subject was hardly pleas-

ing; but he must have something to stare at, and now the sun was down he knew of nothing else.

At Stacey's words he turned toward the billiard-table, and took a survey of the field.

"I won't take you," he said at length, and went back to the mirror.

Whereupon billiards ceased to have further attractions for Stacey.

It seemed as if the culminating point of boredom had been reached at last; but fortunately there were some old fogies in the club, who could be relied upon to furnish amusement to the younger members at times. These old chaps were constantly wrangling among themselves about chairs and small points of precedence, and they liked to prate about the celebrated beauties of their youth, and the gay life that prevailed over a score of years ago. Then they would shake their old heads and scowl at the youngsters, whose conceit and foppery offended them.

One of their number, who went by the name of "Methuselah," was the butt of many witticisms. He told the same stories about the same persons, and was very tenacious of his own opinion. He was as irascible as he was stubborn and was dead against every measure looking to the good of the club. He had been one of the first members to join, and it was on record that he had blackballed everybody who came in after him. It was understood, however, that his veto did not count.

Young Quizzledown was the lad to pit against

him in a discussion of any kind. He knew how to draw the old fellow out, and had a clever way of quoting back his own statements to him so that he would repudiate them in great scorn.

The exiles liked nothing better than to start these two; when the dispute ran high, and Methuselah was denying what he said the day before, they were ready to come forward as witnesses and take oath to these same statements. They agreed to a man; but so pig-headed had their victim become that he would reject their evidence *in toto*.

Consequently, it was something of a relief when Quizzledown appeared in the billiard-room to announce that he had got the old patriarch started again.

"Methuselah is on the Monroe Doctrine, fellows!" he remarked, as he lit a cigarette.

"He was on that yesterday," Stacey Mansfield demurred.

"Yes, but he is arguing against it now and yesterday he was for it!"

"What's that?"

"He is denying everything he said last night, and swears the Monroe Doctrine will be the ruin of the country."

Hereupon, Stacey deliberately put up his cue, deliberately put on his coat, and followed the crowd with the intention of witnessing the sport. Suddenly, however, he remembered that he had not dined yet, and turned aside to the grill-room.

But the others followed Quizzledown into the

library, where Methuselah was holding forth. They entered by twos and threes, arranging themselves in listless attitudes, so as not to interrupt the orator. One of them took up a paper, another pretended to be deep in a book, but none of them lost a word of what was going forward.

Methuselah was having "brainstorms," and was knocking his own arguments of the day before into smithereens.

## BOOK III

### CHAPTER I

IT MAY be a subject worthy of the learned to determine just what the influence of free institutions has been on the feminine character, and doubtless the opponents of the American system would insist on having a hearing ere a decision is reached. There are those who argue that the men of America have freed themselves from every kind of despotism, and have then bowed down to the tyranny of the petticoat. The man American, they tell us, is a very chicken-hearted creature when it comes to his womankind. Ever since Bunker Hill was fought he has been most unmercifully hen-pecked. But for that matter beauty has reigned ever since humanity was created, and will reign so long as humanity exists. It will be petted and spoiled, because it is feminine and thrives on such treatment. A woman, my masters, and therefore to be indulged. Pouting, smiling, inconsistent, a woman still! Who shall interpret her fancies? Who shall unravel her moods? Who can look down into her heart and note every impulse that has swayed it, since she became a helpmate to man?

We have had the pious woman, whose innocence shines forth from her Madonna-like countenance, and great painters have immortalized her. Now we appear to be worshipping something more carnal, something that stands for the extreme of feminine wilfulness, and as yet there are no protests against such idolatry. Angels of heaven, and demons of hell—both, women have been—but who can tell the reason for it? Only the God that made her, and not a weak mortal like herself.

But now that we are in a moralizing mood, it might be well to ask ourselves what becomes of the beings that pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones. Do they in their despair make away with themselves? Do they—

On second thought, however, the theme is too harrowing, and we had best return to our tale without further parleying.

Dick Twaddleby declared that Madge was the most successful flirt he had ever run up against. He confessed, too, that he had been beaten at his own game, and Richard prided himself that he was a match for any woman, when he brought his tactics to bear on her.

One day he caught himself pouring his prettiest compliments into her ear, and saying things to her that he was not sure whether he meant them or not. Hang the girl! She almost made him propose to her. He admitted afterwards he was on the point of telling her he loved her. For ever since her visit to the club, social relations had

been re-established between Madge and the exiles, so that they saw much of her now.

"It would have been bad form if you had, Richard," was Charley Poindexter's comment on this.

"You wouldn't have jarred her, though! That girl is game," Jockey Van Hurdle remarked; whenever he expressed an opinion like this he did so with the air of a man who is willing to put up money on his judgment.

"Well, it takes quite a lad to handle an up-to-date girl, anyhow!" Richard added consolingly. "Chumps need not apply."

"Chumps don't get the heiresses, Richard," Pindexter said, and Dick sighed assent to this.

It was the unanimous opinion of the exiles now that Hamilton Bloodgood was done for, and they comforted themselves with the reflection that they had told him what to do.

"Hammy won't even make place," was Jockey Van Hurdle's way of putting it.

Jockey was not a fool and knew when his horse had been beaten before the home-stretch was reached.

Mrs. Thurston also was satisfied that the danger she had feared was imaginary.

"We were mistaken," she said to Mr. Willoughby, much to his relief. Dogs were the only thing he had feared all along.

"The girl is not deceiving us, as we thought. She is not pining for Mr. Bloodgood and there is

still hope. I have sounded Lillian about the matter. I can trust her implicitly."

We indeed! Mr. Willoughby could not help thinking; for barring dogs he had been neutral all along.

He had about decided it was high time for him to protect himself against her energy. The next thing he knew she would be interfering with his nap after dinner. He was perfectly willing she should run things to suit herself, provided she arrange it so that he could shirk responsibility; but when it came to making him do things, the limit had been reached. It was all very well for her to talk about her anxiety in this case. Mr. Willoughby could tell her of some things he was bearing on his own account. He could unfold a tale of woe that would make her burdens seem trivial indeed. Bless my soul! What was he not enduring every hour of his life? What guarantee did he have even now that he had not passed out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones? If he were like some people he might grow morbid thinking about this. He might assume that he was the most unfortunate of men, cut off as he was from society, his genius suppressed at the very time it was prepared to assert itself. It was all very well to dream away life in Heathdale if a man had not learned to aspire to a professionally-fashionable career.

As to his family—a fine return he was getting for his loyalty to it! If anything, it was a hard-

ship to him even now. Hadn't his sister, Mrs. Wadham Adams, ruined his chances once? Yes, bless my soul, if she had her way he would have passed out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones long ago!

Mrs. Thurston saw that he could not be relied upon to go a step further in this matter, and she must act without his backing now. She let him pour out his objections to deaf ears, while she turned over in her own mind her future course of action. She would beat that man at any cost; single-handed, if need be.

There is no telling what a woman is capable of doing when she has put her whole heart into a matter of this kind, as Mrs. Thurston had. She was not lacking in intrigue; nevertheless, her very next move was a blunder.

Now there was a certain widower in Heathdale, old enough to be Madge's father, who chose to devote himself to her in spite of the disparity in years between them. Somebody, and it was not Shakespeare, although he said everything else, declared that there is no fool like an old fool, and this Mr. Delancy Billop was no exception to the rule. Not satisfied with the fact that the exiles were beginning to call again, Mrs. Thurston gave Mr. Billop encouragement to press his suit, doubtless arguing that any lover was preferable to an objectionable one.

Although the affair never got very serious, Madge was somewhat annoyed by his attentions,

even while she managed to ignore them. Trust a flirt to be equal to an emergency. Sometimes she got amusement out of him, and sometimes she lost patience because he was so stupid about taking a hint—a weakness no flirt is inclined to overlook.

It chanced that the murder came out one evening while a number of the exiles were calling, for of course young men so clever could not be altogether blind to what was going on right under their noses. It had long been an accepted theory of theirs that when a maiden has a chance to marry an old chap with one foot in the grave and a large bank account in the bargain, the certainty of being left a rich young widow on an appreciative world is too much for her.

However, in the application of all rules there are exceptions, and this case they decided was one of them, and governed themselves accordingly. They displayed a willingness to fly to her rescue and flirt with her, that was very generous considering how they had been acting for the last few days. Even Dick Twaddleby forgot how the girl had come near betraying him into an act of bad form, and Charley Poindexter could not have been more roused if somebody had tried to appropriate his view. The old party showed jealousy, which was unpardonable in their eyes—horribly bad form in fact—and only caused them to redouble their efforts to annoy him.

Dick Twaddleby, who had an eye for observ-

ing things, made note of Mrs. Thurston's conduct this evening, and it puzzled him.

"I wonder what she is driving at?" he remarked, after the exiles had returned to the club-house and were discussing the situation over a little warm bird and a big cold bottle. "She carries her fierce pursuit of men too far, and she is trying to marry that girl to the old chump. I can tell her it is no go."

"He's got ancestors, Richard," Poindexter said drily.

Dick shook his head.

"The girl isn't marrying a graveyard."

"A pedigree isn't a bad thing, my boy," Jockey Van Hurdle interposed, thinking about horses as usual.

"That's on the other side of the pond," Dick objected. "They are trying to cling to ancestors over there, even though they have to carry their country into the grave to do so; but in America many people are trying to forget theirs."

"Heiresses don't always have them, Richard," Charley Poindexter remarked absently.

"On the contrary, dear boy, their papas are apt to be decidedly recent, and it is only on account of their dollars that a man is inclined to accept them at all," Richard assented cheerfully.

"Right you are, Richard!" Stacey Mansfield echoed, by mere force of habit.

Stacey's intellect was not down to billiard balls

at this moment, but he was discussing a roast bird with great relish.

"I tell you this sighing for a maiden doesn't go nowadays," this knowing wag went on. "Up-to-date love-making is against it."

"It is horribly bad form, Richard," Charley Poindexter admitted with a yawn.

"Matrimony is simply a question of class, anyhow," Dick said. "If a man is in a girl's class he can get her all right. If not, he is a fool to try."

"The paths of matrimony lead but to the divorce courts," Charley Poindexter murmured at this point.

Poindexter was sitting near a window gazing out into the darkness with a wistful look on his face. He missed that view of his more than he cared to show. It had been such a comfort to him in exile all these years, and the contemplation of its beauties tended to render his banishment from town endurable. How often had he thrilled in his very heart's core to discover in it some new feature before unnoticed, and when anybody else criticised it he drank in their words with delight. That view meant happiness to him, and it kept him in health and spirits. Now that he could not study it until the following afternoon he was telling himself the best thing he could do would be to go to bed. But evidently Dick Twaddleby was in a moralizing mood still and in no hurry to move.

"The Lord must have committed a blunder when He created some men," Richard had started to

say. "He ought to have made a substitute for women at the same time. The real article is too much for certain of our sex."

Stacey Mansfield hastened to endorse this sentiment. Indeed, so great was the affinity between these two intellects that every time Dick opened his mouth Stacey went sponsor for his utterances.

It looked as if Richard would keep on talking all night unless something happened to check the flow of his ideas. So Poindexter put a damper on him by suggesting that it was past bed-time already, and the party broke up at once.

Perhaps these philosophers were not altogether wrong in their summary of the situation as it related to Madge, and Mrs. Thurston should have known enough to change her tactics, lest she drive her victim to the very man she sought to protect her from. It is a well-known fact that sensible members of the sex have been made to do rash things by such injudicious opposition.

It was within the bounds of probability that Madge should accept Hamilton Bloodgood, if she had her way unopposed. Be that as it may, the exiles had proved to her that this Mr. Billop was not even to be considered as a rival, and the next time his name was mentioned in the presence of Charley Poindexter, "Don't know him," Poindexter hastened to say, in a tone that implied he did not wish to. But some people are very thick-headed, and Mrs. Thurston may have thought she was doing a clever thing.

But now a new factor appeared upon the scene, ere affairs could reach a climax. One day Tom Allers called on Mr. Willoughby with a request that Madge be allowed to spend a few weeks with his wife, and Mr. Willoughby was inclined to accept for his own reasons. In the first place he would have the girl off his hands while she was in Mrs. Tom's charge, and he would also be rid of Mrs. Thurston's rule, which was becoming intolerable.

Tom Allers was very civil on this occasion.

"We admire Madge very much, Mr. Willoughby," he said. "My wife thinks her the finest girl she ever met."

Mrs. Allers was very kind, and her good opinion was appreciated. Mr. Willoughby spoke for himself and his niece.

"I think it will be a good thing for my wife to have her with us, and I hope she will enjoy the visit, also. We will try to take good care of her, and she has nothing to fear from me and my brother Jack."

Mr. Willoughby smiled slightly at this remark, which was intended to be facetious—and perhaps it was more so than Tom Allers imagined; for, of all young men likely to be considered harmless, Jack Allers was the most conspicuous one in Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby's opinion.

Therefore, he gave his consent without further parleying.

It was a relief to him to get rid of Madge at

this time. He was in correspondence with Mrs. Humphrey Provost about a matter of great importance to his future, and he did not wish to be bothered by other things. The two were forming plans that meant much to them both, and Mr. Willoughby had almost persuaded himself that his opportunity to embark on a fashionable career was coming through her efforts.

Prudence had learned that her husband was planning a trip to Europe with a yachting party, and would be absent a long time. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Saltearth, was also preparing to go abroad early in the fall. Therefore she was determined to invade New York after the coast was clear and was consulting Mr. Willoughby about certain plans she had formed for the next season in town. In more than one of these letters, too, she sought his sympathy, on account of the troubles her husband had caused her.

“Why doesn’t the little beast drink himself to death?” Prudence wrote. “What a nice position I might have as his widow, if he only would! Black becomes me, anyhow. I could make up with my charming sister-in-law by shedding a few becoming tears over his demise. I would observe all the proper rules of mourning, so that everybody would be impressed by my decorous conduct. And widows are popular nowadays. But the little beast won’t die. He will live on to spite me. His drinking bouts would kill any other ten men in a year.”

But Prudence had nobody to reproach for her marriage except herself. She knew what her husband was before she accepted him. She was lured by the position of his family in society, and she took him in cold blood.

Must we censure her for this? Alas, those who set up a puritanical code to judge modern society will find that they are preaching to empty benches! According to the standard of Mammon a woman may marry without any thought of the duties of wifehood, just to advance her interests. Neither does this kind of a bargain excite comment, because it occurs every day. O mockery of Hymen! we have been tempted to cry when we behold maidens offered up to this modern chimera —wealth, with all the pomp of a marriage ceremony. But the victims go to their fates with smiling faces, while fashion looks on and applauds. They bind themselves with golden chains, and seem to take delight in jingling these before their friends.

The Cupid of the Money Bags is popular in society.

## CHAPTER II

THE poor estimate that Mr. Willoughby had formed of Jack Allers dated from the time of their first meeting. Mrs. Tom brought Jack to Willoughby Manor soon after he had come to live with her, he being fresh from a cattle ranch in Texas.

Mr. Willoughby was not impressed with him from the first. He had acquired such rough manners from the cowboy life he had been leading for a number of years. If the limelight of Eastern culture were turned on him at once it would reveal a rare specimen of humanity on which to test its standards. With this reflection in mind Mr. Willoughby approached his visitor cautiously.

He remembered that Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller had a son in Texas. Perhaps Mr. Allers had met him.

No; Texas is a large State. One man is easily lost in it.

Mr. Willoughby was not impressed with Jack's blunt manner of saying this. But he decided to give him another chance.

Mr. Allers had lived in Boston once. Had he ever met the Toplofters?

No; he had never heard of them even.

Then Mr. Willoughby gave him up. He had a feeling for him that was akin to pity, and regarded him as little better than an untutored savage.

Therefore he smiled when Tom Allers made the remark already referred to. He had had his eyes opened of late to the wiles of young men, but just fancy being worried about one who probably did not know there was such a person in the world as Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones!

The Allerses were connections of Mr. Willoughby. Tom's mother and he were cousins, but her marriage had been opposed by the family, and for years this branch of it had been forgotten, until Tom appeared in Heathdale to remind him of its existence. He welcomed this relative and his wife to the place and let it be known that he countenanced them as his kinsfolk, and would have been willing to introduce them to his friends as such. But Mrs. Tom Allers showed a disposition to shift for herself, and soon knew more people than Mr. Willoughby had dreamed there were in the entire community.

He also interested himself in their welfare to the extent of inviting them to dinner occasionally, and encouraged them to make his house their home whenever they felt lonely. As it turned out, Mrs. Tom did choose to avail herself of this last invitation. She took a liking to his sister, the invalid, and when Mrs. Tom Allers took a fancy to any

one she was sure to let them know it. She was a warm-hearted, impulsive woman, very unconventional in her manners, and very genuine in her affections.

Soon she had made herself talked about in Heathdale in a way that would have hurt anybody else. She went everywhere and met everybody, and could do things with impunity that would call forth the severest criticism in others—things that nobody but Mrs. Tom Allers would dare do. There was an individuality about her that excused her acts.

She used to aver that she had seen trouble herself and could sympathize with others in consequence. At one time in her life she had been forced to live in a boarding-house and was bemoaning the fact even now. She declared she could not understand how she managed to survive it. She was ready to give up time and again, and would have done so if it had not been for Tom. He it was who kept her cheerful during this trying period, because he was so good-natured himself and took everything so easily, just like an Allers, anyhow!

“I have seen that man, Madge,” she said of a person who has already been introduced to the reader, “when he had not a dollar in his pocket, and, do you know, he only joked about it!”

“And what did you do?”

“Me! Oh, dear, I was just ready to give up!”

But Tom's good nature was not always so agreeable to his wife. On the contrary, it aggravated her at times because he was so easy-going. Wasn't it tantalizing of him to sit there smoking his cigar as complacently as you please, oblivious of her trials and annoyances? Oh, well, so much for being good-natured! She was glad she was not, because if she were they would never get along together. There was one comfort, however. Tom was poor, else she would not tolerate him.

All this is what she told Madge, when the latter had come to live with her, and the two were getting intimate.

Neither was Tom the only source of her troubles. His brother Jack was even more of a cross to her. She gave up the moment she laid eyes on him. A regular Allers all over! Too good-natured to live!

"I tell you, Madge, the Allers family were born to be poor and be run over. I have to give my husband a shaking up once in a while. If I did not he would never get along at all."

Tom Allers himself was within hearing of this philippic which his better-half was launching against him. He was quietly smoking a cigar on the porch, but it is doubtful whether he was contemplating a divorce in consequence. Not a sound came from him by way of protest, but presently little rings of smoke sailed gracefully through the open window into the room.

"Do you know I am abusing you, dearie?" his wife called out.

"Yes, love!" and more rings were wafted into the room on the gentle zephyrs that blew from without.

"Oh, dear! Madge, what would you do with such a man if you were in my place?"

"I think I would let him have his way."

"Horrors! I couldn't do that! It would drive me to the verge of distraction!"

Another succession of smoke rings came in through the window at this.

"Tom Allers, stop that at once!"

"All right, love, but I am only smoking my cigar."

"You are not! You are just trying to tease me! I shall be furious if you do it again!"

At this threat the smoke rings ceased to appear.

"Oh, how I dislike these practical people! If they had their way the world would be square instead of round."

Mrs. Tom was busy with some sewing for a poor woman in whom she had interested herself, and she plied her needle busily as she spoke.

"Madge, never marry a good-natured man. He will drive you crazy if you do."

"How so?" Madge asked innocently.

"Oh, dear! Tom told me I was foolish to try to help this poor woman because she would want me to do so much for her, and now it makes me furious to think it has turned out just as he said."

Another succession of smoke rings came pouring into the room at this.

Mrs. Tom sprang from her chair in a rage, and the window went down with a bang.

## CHAPTER III

THUS it had come to pass that Madge found herself living with these relatives and being treated like one of the family. Mrs. Tom soon let her know that she had taken a liking to her and looked upon her as a sister. If Mrs. Tom disliked anybody she would be equally frank about telling them so.

Madge, for her part, responded to this display of friendship. For she in turn liked Mrs. Tom Allers the more she saw of her. She even excused her eccentricities of temperament, as only friendship is able to do; and Mrs. Tom Allers had to be understood in order to be appreciated.

Madge discovered one day that she was a very courageous woman, beyond the average of her sex. She used to keep the windows open of a warm night so that the house might be aired. When asked if she were not afraid of burglars she grew indignant at the thought.

Burglars, indeed! If a burglar entered Mrs. Tom Allers' house she would throw him out of it, and then hand him over to the police. Both Tom and Jack offered to vouch for this statement, and Tom told a story to prove it.

When they were first married they set up house-keeping in a modest little town, and in a neighborhood quite lonely, Mrs. Tom declaring that she had gotten through with boarding-houses, and would not live in the best of them. One night Tom came home very late when he had expected to be away altogether, and it occurred to him it would be a good idea to play a joke on his wife. Disguising his voice, he began to mutter, as if he were several burglars approaching to carry off the property. Instead of fainting Mrs. Tom grabbed a revolver and started for him, and if he had not called out quickly to let her know who he was, she would have shot him on the spot.

Mrs. Tom kept house, too, after her own fashion. It fairly took Madge's breath to witness the rapidity with which she dusted the parlor. Chairs were sent a-flying through the air, and the room seemed to be full of feather-dusters. Before Madge grasped the situation, Mrs. Tom, with a triumphant "There, that's done!" sat down to recover herself before starting in on the library.

She had an old servant who had been in the family for years, and had been nurse to her when she was a baby. This old creature considered herself housekeeper-in-chief, and did not hesitate to scold her mistress. But to do her justice, Mrs. Tom did things that no sane domestic would tolerate.

She cooked dishes according to her own notions and whenever the fit took her, and Tom was al-

ways expected to eat them, which he did good-naturedly and just like an Allers. She explained many of them to Madge, but the recipe is hardly worth publishing.

Everything went off with a whirl in Mrs. Tom's house. She declared time and again that she was an energetic character and she was glad of it. It made her furious to see people poke, anyhow.

She dragged Madge into the kitchen one afternoon to show her how to make biscuit, and the lesson was not lost on her pupil.

"Mollie, I am going to make biscuit!" she announced, bursting in on the old domestic, with a big apron on and her sleeves rolled up over her fine elbows.

"You're not!" old Mollie cried, in wrathful, Hibernian accents. "Get along wid yer blarney! Youse couldn't cook fur a haythen!"

But Mrs. Tom dived into a flour barrel in a twinkling, and soon had old Mollie laughing till her sides ached. The flour was mixed and stirred and thrown into pans and set to rise, before the old soul could recover from her spasms. Then Mrs. Tom pulled her apron off and rolled down her sleeves.

"There!" she cried. "I am sure Tom will like them!"

"Oh, ho!" laughed old Mollie. "You'll be the death of us yet! It's a sin to ask a Christian to eat such stuff!"

But again Mrs. Tom declared that Tom would eat them; she knew he would.

"Do you know, Madge, I once made a pie as heavy as lead just to try him, and that aggravating man ate a slice of it without saying a word."

Sure enough, too, Tom ate three of those biscuits for dinner that evening, and afterwards digested them over a cigar.

There must have been something about Mrs. Tom's personality that made it impossible to take offense at anything she said. She took Madge to task one day on the subject of Hamilton Bloodgood's attentions and the gossip it had caused, and Madge did not resent it.

"I have had to deny more than one story about you," she said. "Do you know there are rumors around that you are engaged? I hope it is not true."

"It certainly is not true," Madge answered stoutly, and her manner of speaking was not lost on the other woman.

"Oh, Madge Willoughby," cried the impetuous Mrs. Tom, "it would just break my heart if it were, or ever should be! He is no more fit for you than my brother Jack; no, not so much."

"But it is not true!" Madge reiterated. "I do not care to discuss the matter one way or the other."

Even this did not satisfy Mrs. Tom Allers. She had made up her mind to have her say, and she was going to have it in spite of everything.

"Madge, I am competent to give you advice,

because I am a good deal like you in disposition. Marry such a man as that? You might as well waste your affection on a statue, for all the return you would get. What does he know about love, as such women as you and I understand it? He is too selfish. He has never been called on to make a sacrifice in all his life; and let me tell you, dearie, love is only a sacrifice of self after all. He has been petted and indulged until he has only learned to gratify his own desire at the expense of everything else. Some women would be satisfied with such devotion as he would show her, but you and I are not that kind. I know he is a nice man in his way, and there is much that is attractive to him."

Madge hung her head.

"He is nice, and—and I do like him a little," she said, without looking up.

"Of course he is nice, and I can readily imagine how you are impressed with him. He needs a wife that can govern him, a cold-blooded sort of a person that would not bow down to him, nor worship the ground on which he treads. Oh, dear! I sometimes wish we women had more head and less heart. Look at the men; how much superior they are to us in that respect. We women follow our hearts blindly and never lose faith in them until we have been deceived. Don't you know, dearie, it is fated that when we give way to sentiment without consulting our reason we are sure to make

ninnies of ourselves? I wish we had more intellect!"

Mrs. Tom had taken Madge in her arms while she was speaking, and the young girl nestled there like a child.

"Don't you know, darling," she whispered, "don't you know that when we poor women marry we have to make an unconditional surrender? It should be our care that the man we choose is worth surrendering to."

Madge looked up smiling now, and Mrs. Tom continued fondling her much as a mother would have done. The two whispered together for some time, until at last the elder woman broke out again:

"Oh, dear! That is nothing at all! I thought I was in love a dozen times before I married. In fact I was just recovering from an affair of the heart when I met Tom. I really believe it is a good thing for a woman, particularly when she is impulsive as I am, to be disappointed a few times. I used to be very romantic once, but I am getting over it. Look at Tom and me, would you! We are very happy together, although I do treat him shamefully at times; but I can't help it. If I had married some other man whom I fancied I liked, we might be quarrelling all the time."

"I never had such a friend as you before," Madge said half sadly. "You seem like a mother to me, and I never had a mother."

"But you shall have one now," cried Mrs. Tom, impulsively kissing her. "I'll be mother to you from now on. Your secret is safe in my keeping. Trust me for that!"

## CHAPTER IV

ABOUT this time it befell there came a crisis in the affairs of the Mercury Club, and great excitement prevailed among the members in consequence. Certain men from a rival club came to pay them a visit, boasting that they were going to show the exiles how to drink, and teach them a few wrinkles in the bargain. As this same club had proved its prowess in other lines, and had offered odds that it would win this trick also, the event was one not to be forgotten by the club historian. When the sun rose the next morning the Mercury Club held the honors, and the visitors were under the table. Jockey Van Hurdle realized his destiny on this occasion by outdrinking everybody, and young Quizledown, who never let a bet go by him, made so much money that he bade fair to become a bloated bondholder.

Now as a result of this drinking bout two factions arose in the club, one seeking to vindicate such practices, the other condemning them, and excitement ran high. There had been disagreements among the members before, but happily they had called forth no display of temper beyond what the club cocktail could satisfy. This one, however,

threatened to be serious, and many began to fear that the breach it caused could not be healed.

Right on top of this came another sensation, which proved to be the straw that broke the camel's back. A new man was proposed for membership with nothing to recommend him but an athletic record, and Jockey Van Hurdle insisted on black-balling him because he was not in the exiles' class. He took this stand in the face of the united protest of the other members, and refused to reconsider his action, although pressure was brought to bear on him to do so. In fact there came near being a row about the matter, until one day the man did something that got into the newspapers, thereby vindicating Jockey.

Now the trouble began in real earnest.

Somebody (nobody knew just who) started a rumor that the club had been guilty of bad form, and straightway every exile trembled. It looked as if the end of the Mercury Club was in sight, because an organization of its character could not hope to exist with the stigma of bad form hanging over it.

It was at this critical juncture that Charley Pindexter proved himself a genius in club-craft. Never had his remarkable talents shown to greater advantage, and it is no exaggeration to say, except for him the annals of the Mercury Club would have closed abruptly.

He brought forward a set of resolutions and was so tactful in getting them out of committee

and forced to a hearing that everybody was carried away with admiration for him, and the club was saved.

His recommendations were adopted with but two dissenting votes, and one of these was known to come from Methuselah, who opposed everything.

This incident marked the culminating stage in the life of Charley Poindexter as a club leader, and proved his greatness beyond cavil. When after the ballot had been announced, some one moved to make the vote unanimous, and every man except Methuselah sprang to his feet at once, Charley Poindexter had reason to feel that he had not lived in vain.

The club tendered him a dinner not long afterwards as a compliment to his administrative ability, and the exiles labored to do him justice on this occasion. They praised him for his courage, his consistency, his farsightedness, and likened him to Abraham Lincoln and the great Bismarck.

Under such circumstances the fact that Madge had gone to visit Mrs. Tom Allers did not attract so much attention as it would otherwise have done. Indeed, it was not until affairs had settled down to a normal condition, that the matter was noticed at all. Then all the exiles admitted that Jack Allers was a clever dog—much more clever than he got credit for being. Jockey Van Hurdle remarked that he would not play the field against him for any odds, and Jockey's opinion was sure

to be a conservative one, because experience with horses had taught him caution.

A rumor even got around that added a highly romantic touch to the affair. It was stated, on the best unknown authority, that Madge had been in love with Hamilton Bloodgood all along, but that her uncle had spoiled the match between them. Certain parties further declared that the girl had rebelled under this treatment, and they professed to be able to describe the scene which followed when Hamilton was dismissed, going into details to give the story a high coloring. There were a few who believed this, and for a while Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby enjoyed the reputation among the exiles for being a devil of a fellow.

But Jockey Van Hurdle discredited the whole business.

"Hammy wasn't even called," he said, by way of comment on these tales.

Now when a horse's name is not called, it means that he was not in the race at any moment.

Charley Poindexter, too, had his version of the matter, but he was not airing it for everybody's benefit.

"I thought that man Allers was not a fool," he remarked, as he took a survey of his view.

"He better look out that girl doesn't make him one, though," Stacey Mansfield answered, assuming that the remark had been addressed to himself.

"Pooh! He knows he doesn't stand a show

without outside help, so he has got his sister-in-law into the game."

Stacey looked up quickly from the billiard-balls.

"Oh, that's the trick, is it?"

"Of course. I thought everybody knew that. If I got after a maiden I only wish I had a woman to work her for me, that's all. No sooner is Hammy sidetracked than Allers' sister-in-law grabs for the girl to force him on her. Clever, isn't it?"

It was evident from the way he handled the billiard-balls that Stacey had not regarded the matter from this standpoint before, and it impressed him.

"Well, if he gets that girl with all their scheming he will do better than I think," he said.

Hereupon, Poindexter approached him and whispered something in his ear.

"No!" Stacey cried, turning away from the table and letting the end of his cue rest on the floor.

"Fact!" assented Poindexter.

Stacey scored some shots that required cool calculation ere he permitted himself to speak. Then he made a proposition that fairly took Poindexter's breath.

"What? How's that?"

If Stacey had discovered a new feature in his view he would not have astonished Poindexter more.

"You don't mean that, old man?" he said in some concern; but he was all excitement, and his pulse beat quick.

Stacey only nodded and went on with his game.

Poindexter was overcome. He watched his friend suspiciously, as if he expected him to show signs of mental hallucination. But Stacey kept his intellect down to billiard-balls, and trivial things were beneath him.

He had actually had the courage to offer Poindexter an odds.

Throughout all these discussions it is worthy of note that Dick Twaddleby had no comment to make; but this was probably owing to the fact that the gravity of the situation did not allow room for joking. When good men like Hamilton Bloodgood go wrong, and quiet fellows like Jack Allers are suspected of turning schemer on account of a pretty face, sober-minded exiles could see no occasion for levity.

"I sometimes tremble for the girl," Richard said at last. "She will keep on trifling with men until she meets one who will take her seriously. Perhaps he will force her to act up to appearances and marry him. That's the fate of flirts sometimes, and I don't know but what it is good punishment for them."

"Don't waste any sympathy on her, Richard," Charley Poindexter called out. "She still has the divorce court in an emergency."

"Yes, and it's the only hope of many a fine woman, too," Richard made bold to say.

Richard was in one of his pensive moods this afternoon, and the spirit of soliloquy was heavy

upon him. It had been raining hard all day, so that no one would think of venturing out of doors. Consequently a large crowd had gathered in the billiard-room discussing the club cocktail, and smoking the pensive cigarette, and there is every reason to suppose that the trend of their thoughts would be toward the unattainable; for it was only natural that when they were shut up like so many hermits in their cells, their fancy should dwell on the vanity of things mundane.

They fell now to discussing the "gentle she," her tastes, her follies, her vagaries, her influence in the world for good and for evil. Jockey Van Hurdle declared that horses and women were God's twin gifts to man. That out of one of Adam's ribs the Lord made Eve, and out of another He fashioned the horse. In proof of this theory, both went contrary at times, and both have to be handled properly. Horses get balky occasionally, and women are sometimes inconsistent.

Dick Twaddleby hung back as yet from this symposium, and an air of gloomy melancholy enveloped him. Nevertheless, every exile knew that his manner prophesied great things. He would come out of his trance in a moment, and then the lion would roar.

Stacey Mansfield, busy with the billiard-balls, had a premonition of what was coming, and stood ready to endorse all his utterances. Poor Stacey! He had not a single idea in his own head, and Richard's brilliancy appealed to him strongly.

Five minutes had passed, and behold, Richard was himself again!

Now the Hamlet act began.

Richard: We men have got to lay low now and give the ladies a show. We have produced our Shakespeare, our Napoleon, and some few others. But we have reached our limit. It isn't men that are going to set the world on fire hereafter; it is women. They are going to get emancipated, and then watch out.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Poindexter: It will be a great day when the fair sex gets the upper hand. The afternoon tea will be a power in the land.

Richard: Everything points that way. Times are looking fierce for men, and they are becoming a useless commodity on the market, now that wars are going out of fashion. What more natural than that women should assert themselves in these piping times of peace? We have nothing to lose by it, because we will be able to live on papa with an easy conscience.

Poindexter: Yes, and marrying heiresses will be considered more honorable.

Richard: That's it, my boy! The old chaps have got all the money tied up so that nobody can get at it, and if things don't change soon revolution and anarchy are bound to come. But just let them dower their daughters handsomely and the young fellows will stand a chance.

Poindexter: You always were orthodox on the heiress question, Richard.

Richard: I have to be, dear boy. They used to picture Cupid as an archer going around shooting shafts at random. The Cupid of to-day posts himself on finance before he practices on hearts. He gloats over a bank account as eagerly as the old Cupid did over an unsophisticated swain.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: A position in society nowadays, like a seat in the stock exchange, comes high, and it is going higher. If there is to be an American aristocracy it will have to be taken from Bradstreet's. I don't know whether it is a disgrace to die rich, but I do know it is hard lines to have to live poor.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The aristocracy of blood has reached its limit and the nations demand something new. We promised society to do startling things when the Declaration of Independence was written, and behold, we have given it the millionaire. There are only two institutions in the whole earth that people bow down to to-day. One is the European with his coat-of-arms, and the other is the American with his dollars.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

## CHAPTER V

THE exiles held their breath now. They realized that Richard had cleared for action, and they strained their ears to catch each broadside. Charley Poindexter was not likely to interrupt the flow of his ideas any more; for somebody had just pointed out to him a feature in his view that he had not noticed before, and in the excitement he forgot about everything else.

Richard: There is no land on the face of the earth where it is possible to put up such a front as in this free America of ours. We have got plain citizens here that could give pointers to crowned heads in doing it, too. Democracy is stuck on a man who acts as if he despised it.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: There used to be a time when we cared for glory in this country and went mad for it. That was when we were provincials. Since we have become free and independent we have repudiated such nonsense and gone in for gold. There is nothing in America equal to the worship of the Almighty Dollar.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: If I were king of a modern state I

would show the taxpayers that it came high to carry me. Then the protelariat would think I was high jinks and would want to class me with Napoleon.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Now across the pond it is different, of course. They have a blooded aristocracy over there, but it has taken them centuries to build it up. How can we expect to rival Europe on her own ground in a generation or two? It is all nonsense to try. American heraldry would only excite laughter, and American coats-of-arms would be ridiculous. There would be the golden mushroom on the dollar argent, with gules highly gilded.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Sometimes in this country, when a man finds he doesn't amount to much, he tries to prove that his ancestors were great people. The more insignificant he is the greater he tries to prove they were, and he only gets laughed at for being below their standard. Why, some of the people who are trying to get a corner on society and freeze everybody else out of it, don't like to talk about their own grandfathers. They are simply long on money and short on everything else.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: You can't blame the American maidens for snapping up the foreign nobleman, though. Titles are the forbidden fruit of democracy, and as such they seem doubly precious in their eyes. The time is bound to come when the

daughter of a President of the United States will marry a crown prince in Europe. I hope it will come soon, because then the American girl may be willing to rest on her laurels.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: It is nothing against a man in the United States to have an ancestor, provided he amount to something himself. Perhaps, when we get more civilized, we will permit an American to sit down and do nothing, because he had a grandfather. But America owes too much to individual effort to-day and exacts something from every citizen.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Now when it comes to a question of aristocracy in this land of ours we discover two plans we can go by. One is European, is servilely imitative, and even Europe herself would laugh at us if we tried it. The other is American, original, not incompatible with our institutions, neither does Europe sneer at it. Europe respects it and does not hesitate to express admiration for democracy for producing it. That American idea of aristocracy is plutocracy.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Plutocracy then is the gift of democracy to modern society. Who presumes to rail at it? Europe does not, for it seeks alliance with it through its best and most exclusive institutions. Yes, Europe offers it marriage with its nobility. Can Europe offer it more? As to the American

who would sneer at it, he better look out that plutocracy does not sneer at him. I tell you this plutocracy is the greatest thing democracy has been able to produce, and democracy strained every effort to produce it. It will have its "noblesse oblige," just as feudalism did.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The problem before democracy was a more serious one than some people understand. How could it produce an aristocracy in the face of the Declaration of Independence? It could not go back on that immortal document, yet an aristocracy of some kind it must get. The world would have jeered at its pretensions to greatness if it did not. The world would have said: "Your institution is of the lower form only. It cannot produce anything above that form." Now democracy was proud and sensitive and wanted the respect of society. It hit on plutocracy and straightway old Europe recognized it. Mighty proud now democracy is of its offspring.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: See now how clever it all is. Do you suppose it would be fair for the American people to proclaim an aristocracy on the Old-World plan? Never! Americans would not submit to it. Neither would it be square for the poor emigrants who leave Europe to get away from its institutions. They have read the Declaration of Independence and they won't become citizens if we are going back on that. So we give them plutocracy and

they join with us in applauding it. Behold, now we too are the salt of the earth!

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: With democracy and plutocracy hand in hand we are moving on to greatness. Once Europe had to discover America. If Europe doesn't watch out now, America will have to discover Europe.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: We are cosmopolitanizing in two ways. The whole world comes to us, and we go abroad to see the world. The result is American society has broadened. We are getting so we are willing to admit that emperors and kings are just as good as we are.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The great trouble with us to-day is our forefathers did everything that was to do, and we are weighed down with bad form. What is the use of trying to find anything new? Columbus discovered the last new thing there was, and ever since then everything has been exploited to death.

An Exile: How about the North Pole?

Richard: We know all about that, dear boy, without going there. That's the trouble nowadays —everybody is so bright a man is afraid to proclaim his own ideas, lest people say he is a plagiarist.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Americans have tested ideals until they are getting suspicious of them. We had some visionary theories about liberty once. That was

before we knew what liberty was. Since we have found out, we have dropped them.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The fact of the matter is we have dethroned genius in the interests of mediocrity and call that progress. If a man tries to do anything great nowadays he finds he is only imitating somebody, and the critics soon set up a howl that he is a poor imitation at that.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Everything is so serene now with the body politic that it is absolutely tame, and at the beginning of this twentieth century we discover an outlook for civilization that almost makes us pine for a little barbarism, just to give it variety.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: Some nation that existed ages before the dawn of history got everything out of life, and we have not advanced beyond it yet.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The Lord intended we should all be rich, I think; but the devil invented poverty out of a grudge he bears humanity. I know a man that keeps a yacht, and yet he is always grumbling that he is poor. Another friend of mine dresses in purple and fine linen and fares sumptuously every day. He, too, complains about his circumstances, and in moments of depression will declare he is going to end his days in the almshouse. So I have decided that there is no such thing as wealth, but only different degrees of poverty, as the mil-

lionaire poor, the well-to-do poor, the respectably poor, and so on by various grades down to the beggars on the street.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: It may be love that makes the world go round, but when there is a good bank account behind it this old sphere just whizzes.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: What do you suppose Adam married Eve for? Because she was the only woman on earth and he loved her? Nonsense! She was entitled to half the Garden of Eden, and he was afraid she would claim her share, so he invented matrimony and got it all himself. Adam was foxy enough for his better-half in those primitive days, and man has been trying to jolly the fair sex ever since.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: The great hope of American society is a growing appreciation of bad form. Issues become bad forms and they are dropped. Prejudices become bad form and they are forgotten. In short, bad form is the hope of democracy. Perhaps some day extravagance will be bad form, and then we will go in for a little simplicity.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: At the present time, though, that day seems far off. People don't seem to care for anything that doesn't come high, and the higher it comes the more they like it. Even matrimony is no exception to the rule. A friend of mine mar-

ried a society queen. I hope he is happy. He says he is. He declares he is ambitious for his wife. I hope that is so. It strikes me, though, that it is hard on him. He is a mere serf to his better-half, and is expected to toil hard and heap up luxuries for her to wallow in. That's the trouble with matrimony, anyhow. So many people get fooled by it and have to make the best they can of it.

Stacey: Right you are, Richard!

Richard: I sometimes think polygamy would not be a bad idea. A man might be reckless about choosing his first wife, or even the second or third, but by the time he got to the fourth he would begin to be conservative. Then, too, we might be able to do away with the divorce court.

Charley Poindexter had mastered his view by this time, and was ready to interest himself in what was going forward.

“Yes,” he interrupted, as he caught this last remark, “yes, polygamy would not be a bad idea, because then a man could keep on marrying heiresses until he became a billionaire.”

Richard sighed and relapsed into gloom, and straightway silence reigned throughout the cloistered walls of the Mercury Club.

## CHAPTER VI

MRS. TOM ALLERS was just ready to give up. In fact, she announced that if Tom did not come home soon to console her she would give up, and have one of her furies in the bargain.

She had always held that her husband was just her own husband, and that there was nothing remarkable about him, nor about herself, nor about any other member of the family. He was simply an Allers and so was Jack, and she was an Allers by marriage, and that was all there was about it. Fancy her astonishment then when a lady on whom she was calling declared that she considered both Jack and Tom very handsome men.

“What, handsome? Jack and Tom handsome!”  
“Certainly!”

Mrs. Tom was so astonished that she wanted to shriek; but she hurried straight home and told Madge all about it.

“Oh, dear! I am just ready to give up! Tom handsome! Why, he’s only an Allers! Jack handsome! He’s an Allers, too.”

Madge smiled feebly.

“Soon they will be saying that I am pretty, and then I shall have to give up in real earnest.”

In regard to Tom, Madge was ready to speak her mind freely.

"Your husband is a very handsome man," she said. "I have often looked at him in admiration."

Mrs. Tom collapsed.

"And didn't anybody ever tell you that you are a pretty woman?" Madge added roguishly.

"Never!" gasped Mrs. Tom. "That is, nobody but Tom, once, and he only said it before he proposed, and then he had to."

"Well, then, I will say it now. You are a very fine-looking woman, and must have been a beauty once, and Tom is a handsome man."

Mrs. Tom gave a gasp and dropped back on her chair limp and helpless. But, fortunately, Tom coming home at this very moment was in time to brace her. How it would have fared with Madge for her rashness we are unable to state, as Jack Allers happened to come in a moment later, and at sight of him his sister-in-law cried out:

"Jack Allers, I am going to pound you!"

Now Jack knew from experience what this meant, and he did not stop to inquire the cause of so abrupt an outburst. He bolted upstairs at once and locked himself in his room and did not come down until the dinner bell rang; for there was an understanding in the house that whenever Mrs. Tom had one of her furies, the dinner bell proclaimed a truce.

No sooner had he appeared at the table, however, than his sister-in-law began to twit him mercilessly

about his good looks and the impression he had made in some quarters, whereby he was made aware of the reason for her display of temper. Poor Jack looked sheepish enough at this and begged for quarter, but his tormentor was pitiless. He stole more than one glance at Madge; but when he perceived that she was not laughing at him he plucked up courage and watched his chance, hoping to turn the conversation by some apt remark.

"Just think of having to hear a young lady call Jack handsome!" Mrs. Tom went on with exasperating playfulness. "Tell me where you have been showing off your attractions, Jack, so I can be prepared next time."

But Jack was dumb under this kind of bantering.

"She said you had such lovely eyes. Don't you think his eyes are fine, Madge? Oh, I could stand for anything but this!"

"And charity fairs," Jack said quickly, and the shot went home.

"Jack Allers, I would like to pound you again!"

Fortunately he was at the other end of the table, else he might have received a blow that was no gentle one, as he could testify. For charity fairs were a sore point with Mrs. Tom, and one that riled her beyond endurance. She had an experience with one once, and was furious about it still. This same transaction she believed was fit subject for a court of justice, or a legal inquiry at the least.

She had purchased a cushion for five dollars and

donated it, and the committee marked it down to a dollar and a half. Then because nobody took it they actually sold it to the man at whose store she had purchased it, for fifty cents. The reader must appreciate the full force of Mrs. Tom's indignation when this point of her narrative was reached, because words fail to convey it altogether. Furious? Well, if she didn't give that committee a piece of her mind, that's all!

"And just to think!" she cried; "just to think! I only succeeded in donating four dollars and a half to that swindler of a storekeeper, and fifty cents to charity!"

As Mrs. Tom concluded she made a face at Jack Allers, who sat meekly at the other end of the table, glad no doubt that he was out of range of her fists. She stuck her tongue out at him, snapped her fingers, and made a motion as if she would tweak him by the nose. Perhaps she only wanted to show how she would act if he were charity fairs personified, so that she could get even with them in his person. At any rate Jack kept out of her reach.

It always took her some time to recover after reciting her wrongs on this head, and this is how Jack succeeded in turning the conversation from a theme distressing to himself. It was fully five minutes before she could finish her dinner, and even then she was so worked up she could not enjoy anything. In this way Jack escaped without further teasing.

After the meal was ended, Tom had to comfort her, because she was suffering so much from the thought of the charity fair; and when he had done this she took it into her head to tease Tom in turn, so as to prevent him enjoying his cigar. She was so taken up with this, hugging him and mauling him as if he were a pet bear, that she forgot about Jack and Madge altogether. The result was that these two had the evening to themselves.

How well Jack improved his opportunity it is not our purpose to state, having no desire to spy on this young couple. While in the presence of Mrs. Tom they conducted themselves very decorously, only talking about the weather and other commonplace things. When, however, they perceived that their conversation did not receive the attention from her that it merited, because she was so busy with her unhappy spouse, they strolled out into the yard, where there was a pretty rustic arbor, in which they could pursue the weather topic without fear of interruption.

Now there are people of a sentimental turn who manage to see a chance for romance in the commonest occurrences. To all such we cheerfully accord permission to give full play to their fancy in this case, if they so choose. Then, too, there are some so matter-of-fact that they never suspect the drift of things, even when an author has labored hard to bring them to their view. Many a love scene is anticipated by the one, and many a climax is wasted on the other.

Take, for instance, the story of Jack and Jill, as touching a love tale as was ever penned. In the eyes of certain stupid persons it has only its ludicrous side. They read that Jack and Jill went up the hill, and Jack fell down and broke his crown, and are simply inclined to laugh at his clumsiness.

But there is a study of true love there, when we come to look at it from the standpoint of a sentimentalist. Jack and Jill—not Jack alone—went up the hill.

How many Jacks now who have known a Jill, and are ready to go anywhere in her sweet company, can fill in the incidents without stretch of fancy! Jack goes with Jill only too gladly, and as he takes hold of the handle of the pail we may be sure that his hand touches Jill's soft palm, causing him to feel a thrill at the contact.

Yes, and they exchange sly glances and coy smiles and blush not a little, and who knows what else these children of nature may do or say to one another as they climb the hill to the well where the water is to be drawn? When at length they start back to the house Jack takes care to carry most of the load himself by a trick of seizing the handle as near to Jill's side as possible, and no doubt he walks in a kind of trance, whereby he stumbles and falls. When now this climax in the tragedy is reached, poor, gentle Jill, all terror and pity at the sight, stumbles after him, to suffer like him, to die by his side if may be.

What more touching tale of devotion, we ask,

does literature contain, if only interpreted by a sentimental commentator?

However, we are forced now to give some account of what really took place in this arbor between Jack Allers and Madge Willoughby, lest the reader's imagination run away with him.

The night was warm and the moon shone bright. But Jack Allers was in a chaffy mood rather than a sentimental one, and the spirit of mimicry was strong upon him. His fancy turned to mock idyllic poetry, as when Thirsty Cloud, chief of the Kickapoos, woos the love of Firewater, the belle of the tribe. He talked in light raillery, and in a fashion that surprised himself. However, Madge seemed to enjoy it.

They did not stay out late because—well, because Jack felt he was on dangerous ground. But the next morning when Tom went out to that arbor to enjoy a cigar before breakfast, he saw a faded flower and a woman's glove lying on that rustic seat. He took a few thoughtful puffs at his cigar, and then a smile played around the corners of his mouth just for an instant. He picked up the glove and carried it into the house, and later found opportunity to put it in Madge's room. But he was careful not to tell his wife about it.

Tom Allers had an aggravating way of keeping his own counsel, anyhow, and it aggravated her at times. He would let her talk and plan without hindrance from him, but when he dropped a quiet objection now and then in a way that summed up

the situation briefly and to the point, she generally got one of her furies. So aggravating, and so Allers-like!

Ever since Jack had come to live with them, Mrs. Tom had manifested a disposition to take him in hand and overcome the defects of his cowboy career. But Tom never would be party to any of these schemes looking to his brother's social improvement.

One day she decided Jack ought to marry.

"He ought to have a nice wife who would appeal to his refined instincts," she said to Tom.

"I quite agree with you," Tom answered. "Every man would be better off if he were happily married."

"How would Lillian Thurston do?"

Tom took a puff at his cigar and answered not. Evidently he was not prepared to choose for his brother.

"I think she would just suit," his wife went on. "I am going to do my best to bring them together."

"Now look here, my dear," protested Tom at this point, "let me give you some advice. Never try to make a match between two people. The go-between in a love affair, like the go-between in a fight, gets all the blows."

It was just like Tom to sit there and throw cold water over her plans. That was why she never accomplished anything.

"Tom Allers, I don't believe you have any sentiment in you!"

“Can’t say I have much, love.”

“I don’t believe you would care if I ran away and left you for good. You would sit right there and smoke that cigar of yours as if nothing had happened.”

“Certainly, love! And when I had finished it I would go out and hunt for another wife!”

Whereupon she gave him a box on the ear.

## CHAPTER VII

PERHAPS it was on Madge's account that Mrs. Tom decided to throw her house open to young people, but for that matter she was very fond of this kind of excitement herself. She had been a great belle before her marriage, and had played the tyrant among scores of admirers, as only a pretty woman can. Tom once declared that for her the road to matrimony had been well lined with broken hearts, and that he had trembled for himself when he first fell into her toils. Perhaps if he had not been so much of an Allers, and so aggravating in his courtship, he might not have succeeded. Mrs. Tom stated afterwards that she wanted to pound him the very first time she laid eyes on him, which was probably her way of falling in love at sight.

She planned now a series of informal dances, because her parlors were fitted for affairs of this kind, the rooms being large and opening up well. Of course anything Mrs. Tom gave would have to be informal, as she hated pokey affairs, even in the line of social functions.

Therefore, it came to pass that the exiles of the Mercury Club were astonished to receive an invi-

tation to a series of dances to be given at Mrs. Tom Allers' house on certain evenings of the week. They one and all received this announcement with visible emotion, and were unable to reconcile it with their theories. For, holding that Mrs. Tom had got Jack and Madge together so cleverly just to make a match between them, they could not understand what this move meant. They were inclined to think, however, that she had the girl well in hand by this time and wished to parade her triumph.

Now the exiles had made it a rule to ignore Heathdale society, for the reason that it was constantly starting rumors to their detriment. Of course such philosophers could not be expected to care for people who criticised them. But in this case they accepted Mrs. Tom's invitation because they were interested in the turn affairs were taking. Consequently, on the first night of her party every exile was present and accounted for.

Some of them went prepared to hear Madge's engagement announced, and these knowing ones would not have been surprised at something in the brass band and fireworks line. It is safe to say that Stacey Mansfield went to satisfy himself about an odds he had offered Charley Poindexter, and Poindexter was there to find out what were his chances of winning that same odds.

They were disposed to be very critical of Mrs. Tom Allers, and they watched Jack narrowly. They were decently polite to the other girls present, but they did not take their eyes off Madge.

If appearances went for anything, she did not look as if she were held in that house under compulsion, and yet you can't always tell, you know. Women are peculiar. Many of them hoped to find in her face some trace of enforced captivity, and were expecting to behold a tear-stained maiden languishing in her bower, with a Mary-Queen-of-Scots air. Perhaps, too, they were ready to play the knight-errant at the very first appeal from her. The exiles were capable of chivalry, in spite of their partiality for cigarettes.

But evidently Madge was in no need of their services, was quite content with her lot, and in the best of spirits. Neither did she seem forced to show favor to Jack Allers, but flirted right under his nose, outrageously and wilfully at that. The exiles thought they saw a warning to him in this, and decided that she was trying to show that he was not master of the situation after all.

Stacey Mansfield accepted this view and felt elated by it. He was a study this evening, as he stood propped up against the wall, his hands thrust deep down into his trousers' pockets, and that keen look in his eyes which suggested that he was drawing beads on imaginary billiard-balls. Charley Poindexter stood by his side equally interested, but not one bit excited.

"No go!" he whispered to Stacey, even as the other was gloating over the situation. "It is all a blind, my boy! The girl is bluffing, that is all."

Stacey winced a little, and Poindexter turned away, so as not to disturb his meditations.

Only once did Mrs. Tom Allers appear to interfere in any way that would seem to credit these suspicions. She approached Madge while the latter was engaged with a small crowd of her admirers, and began to rally her in some surprise.

"Why, Madge, you fly-away! I did not know you were so dangerous!"

The exiles fairly gasped at this and exchanged knowing glances. Charley Poindexter was delighted. He stole up to Stacey's side again.

"Very clever matchmaker that!" he remarked, playfully. "Knows how to call the maiden down, all right. Our friend Richard ought to get her to pick out an heiress for him."

Stacey winced again, and for a moment lost heart.

Ere he had time to recover his spirits another incident of a more serious nature occurred to upset all his calculations. He had been watching his man very closely without being suspected, and he saw Jack and Madge meet for a moment. Very accidentally it was, to be sure, and a less shrewd observer would have repudiated the notion that this *rencontré* was intentional. Stacey managed to get near them, and he kept his ears open. Madge was acting the penitent, he perceived, with all the contrition of a flirt, and Stacey's heart sank within him.

"Would you beat me?" he heard her ask.

For answer Jack bent down and whispered some-

thing Stacey could not hear. She began to laugh softly, and Jack bent lower to catch the ripple of her laughter.

Stacey fled.

If he had been in love with the girl himself and had discovered in Jack Allers a successful rival, he could not have felt worse. His jaw dropped and he looked crestfallen as he sneaked out to a porch which overlooked a garden where there was a rustic arbor, and fairly kicked himself as he thought of the odds he had been fool enough to offer Charley Poindexter.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE circumstance that led to Stacey's final surrender would not have convinced an admirer that the favored man had appeared or that there was no hope for anybody else. But Stacey was only interested in the case to the extent of that bet, and this made him quick to admit what a lover would seek to deny. He had plenty of chances to behold these two together, and the more he did so the gloomier he became. For Mrs. Tom Allers' affairs grew popular and none of the exiles could be persuaded to miss one of them. Whether this was that these hermits, having once crawled out of their holes, found it easy to stay out, or whether it was all owing to Mrs. Tom's tactfulness, Heathdale could not determine. Everybody admitted, however, that nobody else could rouse them from their apathy as she had done. They seemed to have unbent towards society all at once, and dances and tennis and golf became the order of the day. The club-house resounded with merriment of an evening now and was graced by the presence of the fair sex. In short, the exiles appeared to have turned over a new leaf.

Heathdale had never known such a gay season,

and it remembered it with pleasure for a long time after. It was fated to be the last summer the exiles were to pass in the place as mere philosophers and men of the world. Another year was to behold them in a hero rôle, and then Heathdale would be glad to have such recollections of them. But it was all Mrs. Tom Allers' doing. The exiles took a fancy to her and wondered why they had not discovered her before.

Jack Allers suddenly sprang into popularity, too, by virtue of the horsemanship he displayed in polo matches. For with this revival of social enthusiasm, athletics were not neglected. Even Jockey Van Hurdle got worked up over the equestrianism that Jack showed, and Jockey knew horses all right. But the fact is, Madge was sitting in the grandstand, and under the fire of her eyes Jack Allers felt that he could perform miracles.

One afternoon, in particular, she was his inspiration. He fancied that she was watching him with more interest than she had ever manifested before. He pulled his horse upon its hind feet in front of the spot where she was sitting and bowed his acknowledgment to her applause. Every exile present noted this incident and made silent comment on it.

Mrs. Tom Allers sat by Madge's side, dumb with astonishment. She was a good horsewoman herself and could appreciate such extraordinary ability as Jack showed; but that an Allers should do all this was a revelation to her. She turned to the

assembled multitude with pride and delight plainly written on her countenance, and she called Madge's attention to Jack himself with no attempt at concealment. The exiles marked how she fairly hugged the girl in the effort to impart some of her own enthusiasm to her, and they deducted but one conclusion from it. Nevertheless, while still under the thrill of Jack's triumph they could not withhold their applause.

Ere this enthusiasm had time to subside, Stacey Mansfield might have been observed hurrying away from the spot with Charley Poindexter close at his heels. Stacey was walking with a loungey gait, but his whole manner was that of a man who had made a sudden resolution and was going to live up to it. A single glance at his face was sufficient to show that here was a lad who had seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears, and was no longer to be numbered with the unconverted.

The two journeyed in silence, until Stacey spoke: "I call, dear boy," was all he said.

The next day Stacey Mansfield went to a bank and drew out enough money to settle a bet he had made with Charley Poindexter; then he turned himself into the billiard-room of the Mercury Club and hastened to get his intellect down to billiard-balls, as though he would fain forget. It is worthy of remark, too, that from this time forward he was never known to offer Poindexter an odds.

But where was Hamilton Bloodgood all this time, while a rival was trying to supplant him, and

Mrs. Thurston was at such pains to thwart his hopes? We have purposely kept him in the background in order that the reader may be prepared to receive some startling news on his account. However, before it is made public there is much to tell.

Must we admit that man is but fickle here below, and must we further concede that he will follow a fancy almost to the winning of it, and then turn aside to something else with equal ardor? Or shall we dismiss as mere illusion the fancy itself, and take no account of the disappointment that goes with the resigning of it? It is written that every Romeo meets his Juliet sooner or later, and in proof of this statement, behold, Romeo Smith, who was jilted by Miss Jones and Miss Brown, meets Juliet Robinson, and is happy.

But, perhaps we may as well own frankly that Hamilton's passion was of the kind that might be called puppy love. He had been heard to declare that women were like dogs, anyhow—the more you indulge them the more ungovernable they become.

The honest fellow had been having his share of trouble of late. His father had tried to put the screws on him this summer and had failed signally, although he did succeed in making things interesting for his son and heir for a time. To the elder Bloodgood money was god, and with his sordid nature he could not appreciate bull pups even. Hamilton had to bear many things without protest, and felt himself a martyr for so doing.

But it sometimes happens that a man possessed with power overreaches himself and by his despotic conduct excites to rebellion those whom he might otherwise hold in meek subjection. History is full of such instances, but we need not repeat them here. Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad, is written about their folly and their downfall. Mr. Stuyvesant Bloodgood was another case to the point. In the foolhardiness of his rage against his son for his dissipation and idle habits, he put forth an edict against dogs, and straightway the vials of wrath were uncorked upon his devoted head.

Hamilton went to his mother and poured his sorrows into her sympathetic ears. She heard him in silence, gathered herself together in all the majesty of outraged motherhood and then Thetis went to Jove with her tale of wrongs.

Poor Jupiter! Did not all the inhabitants of heaven conspire against him, when he would have interfered in behalf of the godlike Achilles? So, too, this lord of a household was checkmated when he would have acted for his son's good. He argued, he grumbled, he stormed. His wife answered him not a word; but kept looking firmer and firmer and firmer, and in the end she carried her point.

This explains now why honest Hamilton might be seen on these pleasant days driving about Heathdale behind a spanking pair of bays and a muzzled bulldog trotting on three legs under the wagon.

It also explains why he was in such good spirits and able to take life so philosophically.

But Madge did not ride with him behind the spanking pair of bays, although he was out with them every day. A bulldog trotted between the wheels, and sometimes another bulldog sat beside him. Again, however, there was somebody with him not of the brute creation, and on such occasions bulldogs were left at home, because that mysterious somebody did not share his enthusiasm for them.

Suffice it to say that it was not Madge, and for this reason there was no happier woman in Heathdale, as the season drew to a close, than Mrs. Thurston. It became evident to her that such a thing as an engagement between Madge and Hamilton Bloodgood was averted, as she fondly believed, by her efforts alone; for Mr. Willoughby had been but an indifferent ally all along. If, too, he had been a bit peevish in responding to her appeals for aid, it must be remembered that he had been in some danger of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, on account of his loyalty to his family.

Everything had been quietly but effectually done, and Mrs. Thurston felt that the credit was due to herself only. She was a pious woman, and it comforted her not a little to reflect that some day Madge would realize how much she owed her.

Poor creature! Little did she realize what was threatening her own flesh and blood!

## CHAPTER IX

IT WAS at the close of the summer season that the harrowing events, about to be related, took place.

Society was beginning to turn its face cityward, and the exiles of the Mercury Club were looking forward to a return to their quarters in town. Mrs. Thurston, the victim of the hour, but as yet unconscious of the calamity that was to lay her prostrate, was still congratulating herself on the way she had managed the affairs of the Willoughby household, and was enjoying her laurels by anticipation. The catastrophe that dashed her hopes, turning her victory into a mockery, had best be briefly told.

A Roman poet has informed us that there is a monster called Rumor, merciless, hydra-headed, fearful to behold. It respects no woman, it fears no man. It takes its origin from a mere whisper, but grows with every breath until it walks the earth like a giant, resting its head among the clouds. Then it stalks about, bellowing forth scandals with a brazen tongue, getting people by the ears until they believe whatever it tells them.

Now there was in Heathdale a descendant of

this same monster, so dreaded by the ancients, and every once in a while it made its presence known in the most unpleasant manner. We have seen how it brooded over the Mercury Club at times, telling scandals about the exiles themselves. It also forced its way into families, dragging into the public view skeletons which are supposed to be hidden from the eyes of strangers. In short, it seemed to take delight in blackening characters hitherto considered spotless, and some poor deluded creatures were badly frightened by it.

Now it came to Mrs. Thurston and whispered gossip that filled her with the direst dismay. Her daughter had been seen driving about the country with Hamilton Bloodgood, and she was left to draw her own conclusions from this fact.

At first she was inclined to discredit the story altogether, but she took prompt measures to ascertain its truth and assert her maternal authority. She hurried at once to Lillian—and mark now how she was treated by this daughter, whom she had reared so carefully and indulged in every way.

“Lillian, is it true that you have been driving with Mr. Bloodgood?”

“Yes, mamma!”

“Without my knowledge or consent?”

“Yes, mamma!”

“After I had warned you against him?”

“Yes, mamma!”

“Knowing that I did not approve of him?”

“Yes, mamma!”

"And thought him fast?"

"Yes, mamma!"

"And yet you deceived me?"

"Yes, mamma!"

"Has it happened often?"

"Yes, mamma!"

"Will you please explain yourself, miss?"

"We are engaged to be married, mamma!"

Whereupon this poor, deceived parent sat right down on the floor and burst into a flood of tears.

If she had ever thought it would come to this (sob sob), that her own daughter would play false to her (sob sob), she would have been more strict with her (sob sob). She had always trusted her implicitly (sob sob), and this was her return (sob sob). To think that she should engage herself to such a man as this (sob sob)! He had a bad reputation (sob sob). He was known to be fast (sob sob). He did the most horrid things (sob sob). She would never put faith in any one again (sob sob), and would always be selfish hereafter (sob sob).

And so on through a long list of grievances, duly punctuated with tears.

Lillian of the Haughty Face heard her in silence, and then left the room, haughtier than ever. She said not a word, and made no apology for her conduct, and if she felt remorse at all, her manner did not show it.

Poor Mrs. Thurston nearly cried her eyes out. She went to bed and remained there all day, and she

had such a headache the next morning she could not leave her room. Her daughter passed the door several times without offering to enter it, neither did she even give her a look of comfort. It was evident that Lillian of the Haughty Face had a will of her own, that sighs and lamentations could not break.

Later in the week Mrs. Thurston felt better. She dried her eyes, composed her feelings, and summoned her daughter into her presence.

"You may tell me all about it, Lillian."

Then followed a pouting confession.

Hamilton was very nice and she had always liked him. People said horrid things about him, but they were not true. She would have acted differently, but she knew her mother was so opposed to him. Her conduct may have been censurable, but—but she—she couldn't help it. She was sorry her mother had been treated in this way, but—but it wasn't her fault. She—she couldn't help it.

Then Mrs. Thurston took the contrite girl to her bosom and forgave her. Perhaps, too, she cried again, but it was from a different motive. Next she called for her carriage, and remembering that Mrs. Bloodgood had recently returned to Heathdale, she hastened to call on her, determined to make the most of the situation in spite of her feelings. For, indeed, there was no other course open to her, on account of Lillian's undutiful conduct.

She was welcomed by Mrs. Bloodgood with a cordiality that contrasted strangely with her own depression.

How kind it was of Mrs. Thurston to call first! Mrs. Bloodgood was just getting ready to go to her with the news, which she felt sure must please her. Yes, she had just heard of the engagement, and it filled her with joy. She was delighted with Hamilton's choice, and would be so fond of her daughter-in-law. She kissed Mrs. Thurston effusively, and then fell to eulogizing her son's virtues like a fond, deluded mother that she was.

Mrs. Thurston gave a little gasp, and could scarcely believe her ears.

What! Speak about a young man of her son's habits like this! It was almost beyond credence! If such conduct was to be overlooked in this family what was to be expected from it? She trembled for her daughter and was tempted then and there to announce her objection to the match.

But she could not be insensible to Mrs. Bloodgood's happiness, and checked herself in the act of speaking out her mind. Then, too, Mr. Bloodgood put in an appearance while she was still under the spell of his wife's naive enthusiasm. He, it appeared, had not heard the news yet, and his better-half proceeded to break it to him without delay. Mrs. Thurston took heart again from the way he received it.

"You may congratulate me, Mrs. Thurston," he hastened to say. "I hope I may be able to con-

gratulate you, as the affair turns out. I can only add now that we are proud of our son's choice, and my family will feel honored by the alliance."

Poor Mrs. Thurston thanked him with a show of spirit, but hardly knew what to say. She realized that Lillian had managed things so as to leave her no chance to interfere, and her heart sank within her.

But now Mr. Bloodgood went on to declare he realized that his son had been rather gay.

Rather, indeed! was Mrs. Thurston's silent comment.

He even felt that some of his actions might have caused him to be talked about unpleasantly. However, he was willing to think that this was the mere exuberance of youth. He believed, too, now that he had engaged himself to a young lady so worthy he would show his regard for her by different deportment. He realized that Mrs. Thurston had to consider all these things on her daughter's account, and he appreciated the delicacy of her position.

At this Mrs. Thurston took heart again, but it is doubtful whether Mrs. Bloodgood was altogether pleased at her husband's words.

One thing was certain, however. Lillian of the Haughty Face had played her cards well.

\* \* \* \* \*

But now, while the curtain rings down in order

to make time for a little scene-shifting, while the orchestra is rendering a symphony from Beethoven, the author must do a turn before the footlights for the reader's benefit.

## BOOK IV

### CHAPTER I

OUR muse, which has been piping an Arcadian strain among the pleasant hills of Heathdale, must now strike a more pompous measure. How gladly would it linger here with the simple folk we have been depicting; but we are following Mr. Willoughby to town again, and must adapt our song to loftier themes.

Stand aside, ye supers! Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby is about to make a new entrance, and to give the professionally-fashionable set the benefit of his best bow. Aid us, sisters nine, to do justice to him, and begin in epic strain.

As when the great mandarin, the incomparable Tut-Tut, starts on triumphal progress through his favored province. His satellites have journeyed before him, proclaiming the advent of this most sublime representative of the son of heaven. Whereupon the expectant people felicitate themselves at the glad tidings, and beseech him to so far lower himself in his magnanimous condescension as to accept their most unworthy gifts.

This, no doubt, is the way Mr. Willoughby

would do it, if he could; but, alas! he was only an amateur in society as yet, and he appreciated the fact that ere he got to be a star of the first magnitude, he would have to content himself with the position of a social understudy. The first article in his creed declared that it was the whole duty of man to win the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and to be fearful of passing out of her memory. If only she would permit herself to recollect him; if she would graciously extend to him the favor of her approval—ah, that were a boon devoutly to be wished!

Yes, he realized the gravity of his position. To take up society professionally, and make it a life work, to become a fashionable specialist—here was a task indeed! How many that had tried to do these things ere now had failed! How many had passed out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones just as they fancied they had won the coveted prize! Mr. Willoughby had to have faith in himself to make the attempt, and he must be sure of his ability as a genteel tactician. He had felt the pulse of the professionally-fashionable set, mere amateur though he was. He understood the hypocrisy of the drawing-room and could put on the mask of interest at a moment's notice. Something told him this season would settle his fate. Either he was to make a success now, or else he would pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, go back to Heathdale, and accept an Arcadian existence without murmuring.

But until he had made one last trial he could not do this. He had been biding his time in patience, eating his heart out, and his ambition could not be suppressed longer. How often had he been forced to repress a sigh at the thought of society worlds to conquer, while he was merely existing like a creature whose mind had not been awakened to the delights of a professionally-fashionable career! O thrice and three times happy those who win the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones; but woe to them that pass out of her memory!

Yes, the risk was great, but he must take it. His anxiety could not be argued away, it could not be made to vanish into thin air. Even as he slept it stalked before him as a feverish dream, in all its frightful reality. It would laugh at his fancied contentment, and with fiendish glee it would whisper in his ears: Abandon hope all ye that pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones!

Much as Mr. Willoughby yearned for society he knew enough to keep away from it until his position was more secure. To put himself in the way of snubs all the time would be suicidal. In this connection he recalled the pathetic story of a person who labored hard to get an invitation to Newport and only succeeded in passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

He used to declare that he found the dissipations of the town a positive relief to him after the monotony of Heathdale and he chose to believe it was the people he met that affected him so favor-

ably. We know how in ancient times men were healed of their ailments by king's touch. In much the same way the antidote for Mr. Willoughby's discontents was the favor of those who stood high in society. Under the benign influence of their condescension he became a new being.

We can picture him now, entering on the crisis of his life with a courage that was sublime. He had decided to join Mrs. Humphrey Provost in an attempt to win a position that would enable him to take up society professionally. He must have realized what he was undertaking.

Furthermore, he must have great faith in his ability to hold a vantage point if it were once won. He could not be ignorant of the danger of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubboddy-Jones. It goes without saying, therefore, that Prudence had formed social plans that he could trust himself to approve.

We must remember that ever since society has become a profession it is more difficult to get into it. People cannot take it up impulsively and then drop it at will. A man or a woman must be prepared to accept it seriously and with a view of devoting themselves to nothing else. One can serve no other master but fashion. To attempt to compromise with it is impossible. Those in a situation to know will declare that once drawn into the social whirlpool, there is no use trying to stem the current. You must simply drift with it. Society is a jealous mistress. It demands your life service.

Let us see now on what Mr. Willoughby based his hopes and what his qualifications were.

In the first place he was a past-master in all the polite technique of the drawing-room.

He could listen with every show of interest to some aristocratic woman's account of the trouble she was having with her coachman and how one day she was forced to walk nearly half a block to reach her carriage—and regard it as a real tragedy.

He always held his own opinion in reserve until the elect had spoken, and then he echoed theirs. In this way he saved himself the danger of offending against the canons. He forgot everything disagreeable the moment it was uttered; but if he heard anything pleasant about anybody he remembered it and quoted it again. Consequently, ladies would be tempted to pour into his ears the most delightful scandals, which were perfectly harmless because they related to the nicest people. Why, the simple privilege of listening to these blood-curdling tales, whispered under bated breath, would compensate him for all the trouble he might be put to in order to gain the entrée.

Already he had acquainted himself with some of the polite gossip of the day and was posted on much that it was proper to know. It seemed that a great personage in Europe was entertaining the wrong Uppercrust-Millers, under the impression that he was doing the honors to the shining lights of American society. Everybody is supposed to know that there is a branch of the Uppercrust-

Miller family that is not the real Uppercrust-Millers, and none but a European could make such a blunder. Society was laughing about this. Here these people were being lionized on the strength of a family name, while the real Uppercrust-Millers were simply dazed by the rumors that came across the Atlantic.

Of course, society must have its fads, which it will pursue with enthusiasm for a time, and then discard without warning. Mr. Willoughby always interested himself in the latest one; but as soon as he discovered that people were tiring of it he dropped it hurriedly. As to ideas—why, some of the professionally-fashionable set made it the study of their lives not to be bothered with ideas. They would go to any length with trifles just to save themselves mental effort.

Isn't it strange what a difference there can be 'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee? But the truth of the matter is they are as far apart as the two poles. If it were not so, society would not know what to do with itself. Mr. Willoughby appreciated this and harped upon it. He could talk about it by the hour and magnify it a thousand-fold.

But, alas! what would all this cunning profit a man if he were destined to pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones?

## CHAPTER II

To ATTEMPT to buy one's way into American society would be like offering gold to Midas. There is too much money in it already. Nevertheless, this seemed to be the very thing that Mrs. Humphrey Provost was planning to do. She had surrounded herself with people enormously rich, who would back her up in anything she might have on the tapis.

We may take Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones' word for it: Unless society became a profession in America we would have no society at all.

That is to say, democracy will not tolerate an aristocracy except it become professional, only eligible to those who are able to win a position in it.

Consequently, the over-rich have a proper field in which to exploit their wealth. If they do this sensationaly, even vulgarly, it is hardly to be wondered at.

But there are people that have a genius for it, and such persons cannot be kept down in spite of millions. Mrs. Humphrey Provost believed that she had social talents of a very high order and only an unfortunate circumstance had held her

back heretofore. Her husband's family had waged war on her to her disadvantage. But now her sister-in-law was in Europe, to remain indefinitely, and her better-half had gone on a yacht cruise with some of his cronies. Moreover, Mrs. Bon-ton, who was Mrs. Saltearth's fast friend and was known to share her prejudices, was in mourning, and was known to be living in strict retirement. Hence the time seemed propitious for Prudence to make a bold move.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, too, always felt that he had a good amateur position in society, so that under favorable circumstances he could take it up professionally. Just assure him of the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, prove to him that he had not passed out of her memory, and the rest would be easy. He must have seen a great opportunity in backing Prudence now, else he would hardly risk everything he had by joining her in this prospective coup. He was not the man to take such chances for merely sentimental reasons.

And Prudence showed how highly she appreciated his aid by putting herself in his hands up to a certain limit. He was the conservative influence back of her now; but just how far she could rely on him would be likely to depend on her own discretion. If Mr. Willoughby saw the chance to win the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, he would be tempted to throw everybody and go it alone. If Prudence did sensational things which would cause him to pass out of her memory, he would

drop her. Surely no one could blame him if he did.

For he understood the situation much better than she. He was not headstrong and looked the field over calmly. If the unexpected were to happen it would be because people were tired of the same round of entertainments and weary of meeting the same faces under the same circumstances. He himself had planned that the psychological moment was to come at the Horse Show.

Prudence's first move was not a bad one. She had run across an English baronet somewhere and was taking him up seriously. He was the genuine article, and Prudence was not afraid to have people investigate and satisfy themselves that there was nothing spurious about him. The way he adjusted his eyeglass and stared at an unfortunate native when introduced to him caused Prudence to indulge in some extravagant hopes on his account. She put him on exhibition in some of the best drawing-rooms and was prepared to stake her chances on him.

Just before he left London somebody had told Sir Lionel Dudley that the American woman is deuced clever, don't you know. Consequently, he had come to this country with an idea. He was burning for an opportunity to study the American girl in her native wilds and note her resemblance to the original Pocohontas.

Now fate decreed that the first one he met under

favorable circumstances should be Madge Willoughby.

She was introduced to him in due form in Mrs. Humphrey Provost's own parlor. His lordship screwed a glass in his right eye and stared at the wall about a foot over her head when the presentation took place. Then he gave a sudden start, readjusted his monocle and stared right at her, while a thrill of joy, that he could really feel, satisfied him that his opportunity had arrived.

Madge had assumed an awestruck, timid manner on being led into the presence of this paragon. She was the unsophisticated little maiden that was trying not to be frightened. She dropped a modest curtsy, and held her eyes on the floor. His lordship gave another start and his manner betrayed excitement.

Madge curtsied as he continued to stare at her, and assuming a very modest demeanor, began to back away from his august presence.

At this point Mrs. Humphrey Provost could not repress a ripple of laughter.

But the reader will please remember that we are playing for Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones' favor and are taking the chance of passing out of her memory. There is danger that she might become alarmed at these well-laid plans, and assume that outsiders and new people were scheming to circumvent the elect and force themselves on society. To disarm her of this suspicion is a delicate task indeed.

Mr. Willoughby is our hope now. He is in

command and is supposed to have the field well in hand. He had cautioned Prudence to go slow and not try anything rash. She was very daring, he had cause to believe, and if left to herself would be sure to make a blunder. She had agreed to yield the leadership to him for the present, although she did not as yet realize the master-mind that was guiding her destinies.

She certainly had no cause to complain about the way she was being received. Mr. Willoughby had managed it so that everybody was saying nice things about her, and the friends of her sister-in-law were a bit bewildered. It had suddenly become the fashion to praise her before society. It was even whispered that she had been unjustly treated.

Everything appeared to be moving without friction. A hint had been dropped somewhere that had electrified the world of fashion. But the fact is there was need for it.

America's untitled aristocracy had pulled itself together for another season of boredom and had almost lost its appetite for the feast before it began. Everybody agreed that it was high time something be done to put life into things. The stereotyped list of favorites was becoming a joke with the favorites themselves. New people, it was whispered, were necessary to the very existence of the professionally-fashionable set.

Let us breathe softly, for the plot thickens.

The campaign opened very quietly, just a reception or two of the most informal kind, so as to get

the forces lined up for the grand entrance. Everybody seemed to realize that some surprise was in store, but nobody could guess what it was. Some master-mind was in command, and something new and startling was to be looked for.

Now the genius in charge of the situation was no less than Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, and he was clever enough not to show his hand.

It was a great stake he was playing for and he was not the man to shut his eyes to it. One false step, he told himself, and all would be lost. But he had worked out the details of the plan too carefully to be easily beaten. He felt success in the air. Society had been made to believe that there were great things in store for it, and that after all was half the battle.

He had made careful inquiries and was satisfied that Mrs. Saltearth had buried herself on the continent of Europe somewhere, so that her faction could not get in touch with her for some time, if indeed they wished to do so. They were too dazed by the suddenness of this move to offer opposition to it. Everything went to show that if they did decide to act it would be too late. Consequently, Mr. Willoughby was not worrying over the outlook. He had reason to know that Mrs. Snubbody-Jones had very graciously permitted herself to be interested in his efforts. She had heard rumors of what was going forward and had decided to be ignorant of the great plot that was being worked up right under her nose. This made Mr.

Willoughby hopeful that she might approve of it in spite of her antipathy for new people.

But enough of this parleying, and away with timidity! The reader must brace himself and remember his cue. The great climax is at hand.

And now let the orchestra strain itself, and give way to musical frenzy. Let the violins squeak their squeakiest and let each horn instrument strive to outhorn all the others. Sound trumpet! Pound drum! The Horse Show begins! Society has flocked to town in a body to attend it. Here we make our grand entrance, and throw the great stake, be the issue what it may.

## CHAPTER III

WE Americans were accused of provincialism in times past and it has even been hinted that we lack the refinement which can come only with class privilege. Let us answer our critics boldly now, if not with pride, that we have a society in this country and have succeeded in making a great science out of it.

Possibly the rest of the world is behind us in this respect.

Furthermore, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones has declared that she lost faith in all things American until it did become a profession and gave her hope.

Ever since the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock and laid the foundation of the ancestor business in New England, we have been trying to get a social caste in this land of extensive liberty in order to stand off the sovereign people. Our best-laid plans have frequently miscarried, but now that we have anchored on plutocracy all is well.

This, it seems, is the only form of aristocracy compatible with our institutions. It may be that we are a nation of moneyed upstarts. But with our cleverness we have refused to allow an upper class to ride over us rough-shod. We have saved

ourselves from the tyranny of a privileged order and have placed it on a plane with some other things by making a profession out of society.

We pride ourselves on our originality in this country.

And who shall say that civilization is not benefited when it discovers one place on the face of the earth where the self-made man ranks with the descendants of crusaders? With our millionaires to fall back on, poor worn-out Europe may pluck up heart. When some of its impecunious nobles gird on their coats-of-arms and set out to win favor in the eyes of American parvenus, the age of chivalry may return. We can write the sacred dollar-mark on their escutcheons, so that none may sneer at the conceits of an effete system.

It has been demonstrated in this republic that one title of nobility makes the whole world kin. Surely, then, Prudence was wise in staking her chances on Sir Lionel Dudley as an attraction to her friends. Under her chaperonage the baronet was beginning to feel as much at home in the wilds of New York as he would in London itself. Perhaps he missed the fog for a time, but a man can get used to that, don't you know?

His hostess declared he was an enthusiast over yachting, but it was hard for some people to understand how such a man could be an enthusiast over anything. If he could be impressed at all he should have shown proof of it when he was dragged off to the Horse Show and put in a box to admire or

to be admired, as the case might be. However, he simply poked a glass into his right eye and stared into vacancy, as if he were a piece of statuary.

Before his vision was paraded the pomp and vanity of this giddy world, and the sensational exploiting of the same; but he noted it not. Lords and ladies of Mammon were here, showing off their finery for this stranger within the gates, while he only stared and fell to wondering how many of them were in trade.

Some clever person has dubbed the Horse Show "The Feast of All Clothes," because it is customary on this occasion for people noted for their exclusiveness to crawl out of their shells and display their finery for the edification of the public, who know them only through the newspapers. Some of them, out of respect for the event, enter their horses as well as their womankind. Queens of the drawing-room and belles of the season are here, while from every corner of the land Jonathan's fairest daughters gather to this carnival of fashion. They outshine the quadrupeds in whose honor the event is held, and in fair and open competition they would doubtless carry off the prizes themselves.

Are we not tempted to ask now what profession is equal to society?

If the baronet could not be impressed by this sight it is safe to assume that he had not got the London fog out of his brain yet.

But he was not the only one in Mrs. Humphrey

Provost's party who did not appear to enthuse over the affair. It had fallen to Madge's lot to entertain another stranger, Mr. Van Whist Bridges by name, who had recently come over from Paris. She had met him before and the two were good friends; but she was put to her wits' end to find something to say to him that would engage his attention. She pointed out such things as she thought might be appreciated by a man of his cosmopolitan tastes, but he appeared to be perfectly bewildered to find himself in such a strange country. He was, if possible, more phlegmatic than the baronet.

However, it does not follow that everybody from the other side of the pond should be expected to warm up to sights that appeal to the natives. Strange to say, cases have been known of people who were kicked out of Europe, and yet thought they could come to America and patronize its institutions.

But Madge did not allow her guest's apathy to interfere with her own enjoyment of the scene before her. The Feast of All Clothes was in full swing by this time and she found much to interest her in watching it. Like some panorama of fairy-land it seemed, and it set her to moralizing. Here was all the elegance of a society, whose refinement is an ethical money worship, which makes a virtue of living beyond its means. To these people there is no sin like poverty, no punishment like sacrifice of self. It must be that there is a certain flavor

about this reckless dissipation which whets the appetite without palling it. We live, we spend, we squander, its votaries cry, and challenge the gods themselves to produce happiness like to theirs.

New York is the sacred city of Mammon, where he hath been canonized. There is only one more step for us to take now. Let us set aside a day on which the whole nation shall keep the feast of the Almighty Dollar, and on that day let its divinity be proclaimed. Let us do honor to it with fitting pomp and ceremony, as the only god the favored of Mammon should recognize.

We should be an even-tempered race, because the blood in our veins is puritanical and cannot easily be brought to the boiling point. Nevertheless, we have gone money-mad. We will not be satisfied now until the aristocracy of wealth has had a chance to prove to the world its "noblesse oblige." It is almost pitiable to note how the great American people have pinned their faith to the virtue there is in riches. God help them if it prove to be misplaced!

In spite of this musing Madge did not fail to note Dick Twaddleby among the fashionably-dressed throng, and she got a bow from him that was calculated to break hearts. Richard was hot stuff on this occasion. He looked as if he had been melted and poured into his clothes.

Likewise she caught sight of Jockey Van Hurdle, but got no recognition from him. He was making hail-fellowship with the professional horsemen and

famous mounts, those gamey fellows who come under the wire by a nose, and are the real heroes of the turf. He considered them of more importance than the whole pack of society lions, and he had no eyes for the fair sex either.

But his opinion was not the common one on this occasion. In the estimation of the public, horses were not being judged now; men and women were on review. Every member of the professionally-fashionable set, every noted society amateur—what an array it was, to be sure! Society is woman's realm in this free land of petticoat tyrannies. The male creature is only a secondary satellite in it. The queens of fashion were holding court here now.

If Mrs. Humphrey Provost had planned to make a sensation with her party she could not have succeeded better; for her box was the cynosure of all eyes, and surely she may be pardoned a thrill of exultation at the triumph she had won. All the honors which the votaries of fashion covet, all the favors which Mammon can bestow, seemed to be there at that moment; and who shall pretend to despise them altogether?

Is there any wonder then if her eye sparkled a little brighter, and the proud pose of her head proclaimed the satisfaction she felt?

But she was not alone in this feeling of happiness. By her side in all his glory sat Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, with his best Willoughby manner on, and the Willoughby bow very much in evidence.

Everybody appeared to be looking at him, he was being recognized on all sides, and his soul exulted within him. He did not for a moment consider that the baronet was in any way responsible for this, but took the whole credit to himself. Society was welcoming him to its folds again, him, and him only, and the coveted goal was before his eyes.

Mrs. Rowdydow bowed to him; Mrs. Tommyrot blew him a kiss; Mrs. Wayinit waved her hand; the Princess De Flimflam smiled upon him—the Princess De Flimflam, who was Miss Dunover.

But his head was not turned by this show of favor. The great event he was looking forward to had not pulled off yet. His mental vision was centered on the box where Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones sat, and he realized too well that on her nod hung the fate of this issue. She had been posted about this matter. She knew what he had at stake. On her approval he had builded his highest hopes.

Suppose now she were to ignore him? Then farewell, Ambition! By that sin fell the angels, and how could Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby expect to profit by it?

Mr. Willoughby was outwardly calm, but inwardly he was on fire. As he looked about him it seemed as if every box was empty except the one.

Every nerve in his body was at its highest tension, and he was bracing himself for his great opportunity.

She must have seen him now.

The supreme moment was at hand.

His heart almost stopped beating.

She bowed.

She smiled!

She waved her hand!!

She blew him a kiss!!!

Prick him at this moment, and would he bleed?

Pinch him, and would he feel pain?

The day of setbacks had passed now.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had arrived.

## CHAPTER IV

BECAUSE society has become a profession, it does not follow that it is governed by certain rules which anyone may hope to master. It is more than a profession. It is a calling. It behooves all those that have yearnings for it to examine themselves, so as to discover whether they be of the elect. In fear and trembling they should go about this, because it is predestined and fore-ordained that certain persons pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones in spite of their most honest efforts to make their salvation sure.

No one was more aware of these facts than Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, and now that the crisis of his life had come, he could be relied upon not to do anything rash. It was very well known that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had a horror of new people, and as he had been identified with Prudence and her friends he might be compromised yet.

Therefore he proceeded to protect himself by throwing Prudence over as soon as he could.

In this he proved that he was a master of the polite art of getting on in the fashionable world.

If now any are inclined to reproach him with disloyalty it is only fair to say that Prudence set

him the example. Possibly she had a secret contempt for Mr. Willoughby's timidity, and was glad to get rid of him. She realized that she could only succeed by employing sensational methods, which he would be sure to oppose, and she was not likely to handicap her chances by being too thoughtful of anybody. There was a conservative element in society that was bound to be against her, anyhow.

Prudence chose to assume a humble air before some of Mrs. Saltearth's friends that was calculated to disarm their suspicion of her. To others she even expressed regret that her sister-in-law was out of town, as it deprived her of a chance to make peace with her. To everybody she spoke so kindly of her husband's family that many began to think she was the most harmless of women, and they could not but wonder that she had been represented to them as a dangerous character. But they did not know Prudence because she was masking her real feelings.

They had only heard Mrs. Saltearth's side of her story yet, and it amazed them to learn there was another phase of it. Prudence openly moaned the fact that her husband had refused to be reconciled to her when she had used every means in her power to reclaim him.

This was the boldest, cleverest move she had made to disarm opposition to her plans, and it must be confessed that she did this at random. She was in some trepidation as to whether it would suc-

ceed or not. But as it turned out it worked admirably.

Prudence declared that she would give her life if she could only see the man for whom she had sacrificed so much, saved from the degradation into which he had fallen through no fault of hers. She had shed bitter tears over his treatment of her. She could not—would not—blame his sister for taking his part; but, ah, if the world knew what she had suffered! She was living in the hope that some day her husband would realize his mistake and return to her. Gladly—too gladly—would she forget and forgive him all.

Is it not beautiful to contemplate such wifely devotion under trying circumstances? When such sentiments as these were being dealt out to everybody, it is no wonder that more than one person was taken in by the counterfeit of meekness that Prudence affected now. It began to be said that Mrs. Saltearth was vindictive, and Prudence was a wronged woman. Everybody had to admit that her side of this story was being told for the first time.

With one of the most squeamish of her sister-in-law's friends, Prudence went the limit. She besought her aid to get her husband to return to her. This was the finest piece of acting she had undertaken, and she succeeded in working up a great deal of emotion over it.

When she chanced to look at herself in the glass afterwards she found two tears in one eye, a third

in the other, and still another tear actually trembling under an eyelash. She clapped her hands in great glee and laughed merrily over this discovery.

But if Prudence could be accused of acting a part in cold blood in her efforts to win society, Mr. Willoughby's conduct formed a striking contrast to hers. If she was all sham and humbug, he was all guilelessness. His simplicity was such that he played right into the hands of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and, it must be confessed, he fell a willing victim to her wiles.

If so great a personage could be said to have a weakness of any kind, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones permitted herself to have a horror of new people and their schemes to advance themselves in society. It may have been on this account that she took up with Mr. Willoughby now.

Perhaps she suspected that his hand had guided this movement to a successful issue. Possibly she saw the advantage of binding this master-mind to her as a precaution against further reactionary plans. A crisis was pending, and nobody could tell just what it might prove to be.

Be this as it may, the important fact remains that Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby suddenly found his ambition realized. He was able to take up society professionally, secure of the favor and countenance of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones. What greater happiness could any man ask for?

One day this great personage very graciously permitted herself to discover that Mr. Willoughby

was an apt pupil and could be trusted implicitly. Hereupon she took him into her confidence.

She told him what a struggle her life had been against outsiders and new people and their efforts to break into society. She revealed to him many of the mysteries connected with the world of fashion. She even hinted how much she had done to create the professionally-fashionable set.

The battle had been a hard one. Without a nobility, with no court nor a class system, society in America had developed on professional lines.

Yes, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was so impressed by his genuineness that she permitted herself to make him her confidant. She poured out her heart to him as she had never been known to do to anybody before.

This proves that Mr. Willoughby had not assumed too much when he decided to make society the aim of his life.

Handicapped, as he had doubtless been, his was the kind of genius that could not be kept down. In spite of the drawbacks of a narrowing environment he had won the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and was no longer liable to pass out of her memory. Furthermore, in the crisis that society was now facing he managed it so that he was the one to whom she turned for comfort while factional schisms raged among the elect.

Great was Mr. Willoughby's amazement to learn that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones considered herself a martyr to her position. He had imagined her to

be a proud, self-satisfied woman, pluming herself on the fact that she was society's acknowledged leader. But he found now that these honors were almost too much for her to bear.

He was at a loss to account for this at first, and it was not until he came to know her more intimately that he realized what her intense feeling on this head meant.

She gave him to understand that her lot was far from enviable. Her very slumbers were haunted by visions of outsiders and new people breaking into society.

If Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was planning to play on Mr. Willoughby's credulity with the design of prejudicing him against Prudence and her friends, she could not have gone about it more artfully. She permitted herself to become very much worked up over this matter. She even declared that outsiders and new people would be the death of her yet.

Then she painted their character in the blackest colors. With diabolical cunning they were seeking to circumvent the elect. The awful spectre which she associated with their plotting was ever before her. It gave her no peace. She worried about it more than she cared to show. She did not like to see society becoming so popular. This was proof to her that new people were making their influence felt. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones shuddered as she looked into the future. If things kept on as they were going the old families would soon find them-

selves shoved aside and new people dominating the situation. She hated to think what was likely to happen unless they were held in check.

Society was getting along so well now. Her fear was lest outsiders and new people drag it down.

"Ah, my friend, I am a martyr to my position," she concluded. "Few realize what I have to bear, and there is nobody to sympathize with me. Some day you will remember what I tell you now."

At this Mr. Willoughby took the alarm himself. He regretted that he had accepted Prudence for an ally and registered a vow that he would not be responsible for any of her friends from this time forward. Bless my soul, he did not realize how dangerous such people were, until Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones made him understand their real character!

Plainly Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was relieved to find that he shared her fears. She had his measure and knew how to handle him hereafter. He could be relied upon to do as she wished if things came to a crisis. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had too much at stake to run any chances in case Prudence became dangerous. If she could maintain a neutral position while others were drawn into factional quarrels, perhaps her prestige as a society leader would be increased.

She was very gracious to Mr. Willoughby and even permitted herself to become interested in him. She appeared to be giving him her confidence without reserve and this could not fail to flatter his vanity. He belonged to her now, body and soul.

Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones assured him that society was the one passion of her life. She lived for it, she planned for it, and for it she was sacrificing herself.

Her ambition was to make a syndicate out of it, so that she could control it absolutely.

She proved how dearly she loved it by submitting to the burdens it put upon her. She could not help but feel that she was a martyr to it; but let that pass. Some day society would realize what she had endured. Some day—but she was Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and could afford to ignore things.

In America we have succeeded in producing an untitled aristocracy that can rival the nobility of any other nation.

How have we done this?

By making a profession out of society.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was not afraid to admit that our system is not perfect. It suffers from too much sensationalism; in fact, it appalled her to note the effect of sensationalism on modern life.

But, what can one expect in a land where outsiders and new people have so many opportunities?

At this point Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones let fall a remark that gave Mr. Willoughby a new insight into her character.

She declared it was a mistake to make the butterfly the emblem of society. The crocodile would be more appropriate.

## CHAPTER V.

OUTSIDERS and new people should be held responsible for any blemishes the reader may be pleased to discover in the character of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones. Freed from the burdens of her position, there is no telling what womanly traits she might have developed. As it was, she was in danger of becoming a perpetual mother of sorrow, worrying about society.

Besides, she was forced to view life from the standpoint of the over-rich. The luxury of disappointment, the sweetness of self-denial—what could she know of these? All her desires were likely to be gratified as soon as she expressed them.

In this connection it may be proper to ask whether Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones' feelings were genuine, anyhow. At times she permitted herself to believe they were.

But she was very good-natured and not above taking an interest in others. It is on record that she once expressed sympathy for an acquaintance who had met with adversity; and at some public affairs she permitted herself to be pointed out to people who could never hope to meet her.

It is only natural, however, that she should mur-

mur against her burdens provided there was no danger of her emotion being misinterpreted. One day she happened to be entertaining a foreigner of note, and she availed herself of the opportunity to pour out her heart to him. It is hardly necessary to state that he was very much affected by her tale of woe.

This man was a personal representative of august sovereignty at Washington and was simple-minded in spite of his knowledge of diplomacy. His training in politics should have taught him wisdom; nevertheless, he showed himself ignorant of the ethics of sham, as applied to society in the land of the Stars and Stripes. For, when Mrs. Snubbody-Jones revealed to him the peril that confronted this nation unless outsiders and new people were held in check, he was greatly startled.

But it is very likely that the intense feeling which Mrs. Snubbody-Jones permitted herself to display on this occasion was only skin-deep. It is even possible that this representative of august sovereignty was not quick-witted enough to understand her. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was more clever. He discovered that Mrs. Snubbody-Jones took only a crocodile interest in many of the things that were forced on her attention.

Mr. Willoughby understood at once what was the reason for this. He too had been tempted to play the hypocrite, and he had learned to counterfeit interest in things that did not appeal to him at all. If now Mrs. Snubbody-Jones was able to

do this because she had taught herself to be a crocodile, Mr. Willoughby realized how it was she held the leadership of society against all comers.

For genuineness is dangerous in the drawing-room at times. Artificial sentiment is far safer. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, it seemed, could feign interest in a crocodile fashion and could work herself up to crocodile raptures, in a way to deceive most people.

In the face of this discovery Mr. Willoughby became more enthusiastic over his patroness than ever. With his fine nature he felt that he could sympathize with her—in a crocodile fashion, at least.

Imagine his delight now when she permitted herself to give way to crocodile emotion right before his eyes! Mr. Willoughby was moved to shed crocodile tears, he was so affected.

For the crocodile idea, as Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones conceived of it, was the refined art of appearing to be interested in things you do not care a straw about. It was the ethics of sham carried to the limit.

If it was necessary to be moved by some trifle, she could pump up any amount of crocodile sentiment at a moment's notice. If, on the other hand, she desired to assume an air of indifference, how easily crocodile apathy came to her relief!

Now we understand why so many people passed out of her memory. She only took a crocodile

interest in them in the first place. We can also realize how she bore the burdens of the over-rich without breaking down under them; and lastly, the reader can appreciate what a science fashionable life has become to those who make a profession of it.

Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones did not hesitate to criticise society itself from a crocodile standpoint, and Mr. Willoughby perceived that her strictures meant nothing. She said frankly that if it were judged by ideal standards, society was full of shams and humbugs. It cares too much for appearances, and its arrogance borders on the vulgar. But just look at it from a crocodile standpoint, and we form a higher opinion of it. Society is not false, except in a crocodile way. Its humbugs are only crocodile humbugs. Its follies are only crocodile follies. Neither is there sham in it, but only crocodile make-believe.

She illustrated some of her views on this subject in a practical way about this time, when she very graciously permitted herself to be at home to the professionally-fashionable set. This affair was a fine illustration of the crocodile theory as applied to entertaining, and many people were highly edified by it.

Neither is the idea without its advantages in a country where society has become a profession, that only a few can follow. When people who have met season after season, come together again to discuss the same topics, it follows that there must

be more or less acting at these great social functions.

Then why not try the crocodile plan? Let each and every guest be coached for the part they are to play, and understand beforehand just what topics are to be discussed, and how much interest it is proper to show in each. If any sensation is to be sprung it might be rehearsed at least a week before, so as to guard against blunders.

In this way things would be simplified and the art of entertaining would become an art indeed. Guests would be able to study for a reception, very much as actresses study for the stage. People who were not on good terms with each other could patch up a crocodile truce for any occasion, and the duties of hostess would be rendered more agreeable.

Probably Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had this very idea in mind when she brought together a lot of people who knew each other too well, and set them to acting like perfect strangers. She made them discuss topics that had already been worn threadbare, without appearing to be bored by them. She even made them work up a crocodile enthusiasm for things they had all but wearied of—just because she managed to make her guests understand that she was only taking a crocodile interest in them herself.

There are heights of rapture to which only crocodiles can rise. There is an ecstasy that a crocodile alone can feel. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was able to impart such enthusiasm to the elect

who gathered about her now to receive instruction from the leader of fashion and get ideas for the season's programme.

Wasn't it sublime? Wasn't it thrilling?

Here were people that had tired of everything, beginning to take a crocodile interest in themselves. It was within the probabilities that under the crocodile system they would find life worth living after all. As a crocodile state of being it might become tolerable even to these unfortunate over-rich.

Yes, as Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones declared, the crocodile idea was the salvation of modern society.

Not only so, but it was possible to bring about a social millennium, in which all should be crocodile peace and harmony. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones persuaded certain of the elect who hated each other to join in a crocodile love-feast for this occasion.

It had been arranged that Mrs. Wayinit should recognize Mrs. Frontup, although the two had not spoken for months. Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller agreed to be nice to Mrs. Doneover, whom she cordially disliked. Great pressure had to be brought to bear on the two Mrs. Topcrusts to get them to act their parts. They only consented to be reconciled in this crocodile fashion for a brief evening, when it was pointed out to them that their obstinacy would be the one jarring note of the gathering. Under these circumstances they consented to bow and smile and exchange two remarks about the weather.

But the sensation was reached when Mrs.

Humphrey Provost appeared in company with one of Mrs. Saltearth's partisans, who had stood out longest against her. The two were very pleasant and chatted on subjects that had been furnished for the occasion as if they had become bosom friends. Except that everybody had been prepared for this, excitement might have run high.

It was a great triumph for Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones and the crocodile idea. Many people spoke of the affair with emotion and could scarcely restrain their tears. The picture of social harmony, with all spite, jealousy and bitterness forgotten for the time being, was touching to reflect upon. More than one member of the professionally-fashionable set had cause to recall it with regret afterwards, and it was referred to as an era of good feeling that bore fruit for the benefit of all.

But there was one person present on this memorable evening to whom all this acting seemed real. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had been told that he was to make himself agreeable to Mrs. Freddy Topcrust and keep her from meeting her sister-in-law. Having been informed what was expected of him, he devoted himself to his task with all the ardor of a crocodile nature.

But this was not his only part in the success of this great function. He had several other people on his list on whom he was to keep an eye, for fear lest a danger-point might be reached if they found themselves thrown with parties they hated. The tactful way in which he comported himself under

such trying circumstances was not lost on Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones.

Everything had been so well planned that the affair passed off in a glamour of refined hypocrisy. Much smart talk was indulged in without risk to anybody, and many bright things were remarked at the expense of people not in society. Was it not a pleasing sight to behold rival leaders saying sweet things to each other for appearances' sake? Who could witness such gracious deportment and not be willing to endorse the crocodile idea?

Yes, it was a great triumph for Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and a vindication of her theories.

But the reader is warned that only those who are capable of appreciating a professionally-fashionable reputation can understand these things.

In any case society in all its phases must be taken seriously. It has risen to the dignity of a science now, and for fine acting the drawing-room threatens to rival the stage.

## BOOK V

### CHAPTER I

WHEN an author has climbed into the pulpit and has begun to lash the congregation of readers which has assembled to receive instruction from him, it is only to be expected that he will inveigh against the pomp and vanity of this wicked world without caring how hard he may hit some of his flock who are notoriously fond of its pleasures. As he looks down on the fashionably-dressed throng in the front pews, and reflects that all these people, outwardly so pious, are only given over body and soul to the worship of the Almighty Dollar, his heart sinks within him.

The text he has chosen may be burning into his brain, but he asks himself how he is going to prick the consciences of his hearers. How shall he persuade them to renounce their idols and return to the true faith with pure hearts and minds purged from hypocrisy? Even though he have confidence in the miracle-working power of the truth he is proclaiming, he cannot but reckon the odds arrayed against him.

The fact of the matter is, there is a villain in

society to-day, and he is there to corrupt it. He has learned the arts, he understands the refinements, and he can use them for his own ends. He is charming in manner, polished in speech, and is altogether too fascinating to be ignored by the most finical.

Now the name of this villain is Mammon.

We may meet with him at any moment, and doubtless have seen him a score of times without recognizing him. For he is so expert, this villain of to-day, he can make himself invisible at will, and possesses other miraculous powers. Like the god Vishnu, he can take on any form to foil those who labor for his extermination. He can hoodwink pious people, and he has even been known to ascend into fashionable pulpits and write his damnable mockeries into the minister's sermon.

Yes, he is very clever, this villain of to-day. You may behold him of an evening flirting with the season's belle, and pouring into her ears tales of rich husbands. How she laughs as he tells her that love and riches go together! He can say the wittiest things and turn the prettiest compliments, and he never fails to make himself popular wherever he goes. Some of the people that fawn upon him have more conceit than brains; but the learned and the clever are glad to have his favor. He is present at the most select gatherings, and many silly people invite him to their houses for the sake of the standing he gives them.

In short, Mammon has got such a grip on

society it is impossible to shake him off. The great of the land do homage to him and the faithful never tire of telling the miracles he has performed, how the magic touch of his gold brings joy to them that mourn.

It is the reader's privilege to follow Madge Willoughby into this gay world of fashion, where Mammon reigns supreme, and where perpetual novenas are said in his honor. The reader is warned, however, that the author reserves the right to preach his doleful sermon against vanity and pride wherever his heroine leads him, be it in ball-room, drawing-room or boudoir. Mammon, it seems, can set up his shrine where beauty and innocence reign, and none may beat him prating about virtue. But go where he will, take on what shape he may, the writer of these pages will seek to unmask him before the gay crowds who cringe for his favor. If, too, we venture at times to quarrel with the precepts laid down as a guide for young womanhood in thousands of refined homes throughout this money-worshipping land, we shall do so fearlessly and without thought of consequences. As long as society aims to teach veneration for the money power, and tries to carry covetousness to the extreme of refinement, it must expect that some rude moralist will not hesitate to rail at its hypocrisy.

Madge's friends were to be congratulated on the sponsor they had found for her, now that she was to make her entrée in the professionally-fashionable

world, and be signed and sealed to the service of Mammon. Mrs. Humphrey Provost would be sure to impress on this neophyte the importance of the step she was taking. The golden chain that was to link her forever to fashion and folly and pride would be received as a pretty trinket. Something would whisper in her ear: "I am Ambition. Command me!" until at last her sense of resistance would be dulled, and she would be freed from the thraldom of conscience.

If her preceptress moralized on things refining and polite, she would be sure to do so from the standpoint of a woman of the world. Even matrimony can be considered from a professional standpoint, and the Cupid of the Money Bags dotes on a good bargain.

Just fancy being tied to a man that cannot afford to pay for your carriage! Fancy having to deny yourself luxuries, and wrangle with trades-people over their accounts! Love in a cottage is the dream of poets and visionaries. Money is the key to all happiness. It is power. It gives opportunity and position. America is a democracy of poverty with an aristocracy of wealth.

It has come to be accepted in professionally-fashionable circles that a woman should only tolerate a husband if he be wealthy. It is a mistake to assume that the over-rich are opposed to matrimony, provided it stands for something. The Cupid of the Money Bags is very popular with people who laugh at domestic simplicity.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost was lecturing Madge one day on this very subject. When she was talking at any length she waved a fan in a languid fashion, just to emphasize her remarks. Madge was inclined to take issue with her on this particular occasion, it seemed. Possibly the spirit of wilfulness was strong in her, and she liked to defy one who assumed such superior knowledge of the world and its ways. Possibly, too, there was just a taint of middle-class prejudice in her character, that would assert itself even now, to the mortification of her kind preceptress.

Madge declared stoutly that she could not marry from selfish motives, because she was sure she could never learn to love in a practical fashion.

The fan that Mrs. Humphrey Provost held in her hand waved more languidly at this outburst.

“Love!” Prudence echoed, in some scorn. “Nobody asks you to do that. Only marry well.”

“Never!” cried Madge, in sudden fire. “I could never marry a man I did not love and esteem!”

The fan moved so languidly now it scarcely seemed to move at all.

“You are a strange child! Sometimes I think you have character. Isn’t it time for you to dress?”

Hereupon this highly excellent lesson ended for the present.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost could not be insensible to her protégée’s charms, and gave her no chance to indulge cheap sentiment. She noted with some alarm that Sir Lionel Dudley was beginning to

show signs of admiration for her, and she took care to warn him that the girl was poor, and consequently was not a desirable party for him to exercise his fascinations upon. But the baronet had heard that American girls are deuced clever, don't you know, and this one appeared to be a good subject to study.

One day he happened to be in the parlor when Madge entered the room. The baronet readjusted his eyeglasses and gave her a stare that was meant to be encouraging. But she feigned shyness.

The Englishman looked puzzled. Perhaps, now, the girl was only making fun of him.

Madge approached him, curtseying low.

Really, now, she must be joking.

She approached a little nearer and then began to back away from his august presence.

The baronet was dumbfounded, and for a moment hardly knew whether to be indignant or not.

She retreated towards the door, opened it, facing him still, and then with another bow backed out of it.

The Englishman was amazed. He stared at the door a full minute, and then turned to the mirror and stared at himself for two good minutes by the clock.

All at once he thought he heard a laugh—a silvery, mocking ripple of laughter, behind that door.

He was fairly staggered.

He rushed to open it and as he did so Mrs. Humphrey Provost, and not Madge, entered the room.

There was a look on his face and a light in his eye that made Prudence quail for a moment. She had just passed Madge hurrying up the stairway, and she surmised that something was in the wind. The baronet threw the door wide open and stared into the hall above.

"A very clever girl that!" he remarked, with an enthusiasm quite foreign to him.

Prudence took the alarm. The little minx, she thought, I would like to tear her eyes out! But she only smiled faintly, and appeared to be amused.

"A devilish clever girl, now!" the baronet said again.

"Not only clever, but very pretty as well," Prudence answered, in softest voice. "The men all admire her, and she wins everybody's approval."

The baronet was stroking his iron-gray whisker, and he nodded assent to this.

Prudence was in a quandary.

"It is too bad she is so poor, though," this paragon of tact and diplomacy hastened to add. "I have taken up with her at her friends' request to get her into society and find a rich husband for her. She must have money, for she is penniless, and what does position and rank count for nowadays without it?"

The baronet checked himself in the very act of stroking his whisker.

"Too bad, now! Really!" he said, with an energy that surprised himself.

Then, as he beheld Mrs. Humphrey Provost looking at him keenly, he fell to surveying his features in the mirror.

"I have planned a brilliant match for her," Prudence continued, in the same soft tone. "Mr. Van Bridge Whist is the son of an old friend of mine, and he has money. I have got him over from Paris on purpose to meet her. I would be only too pleased if they were to take a fancy to each other, and I think they will."

The baronet turned from the mirror, took a chair, and stared straight at Mrs. Humphrey Provost.

"Don't you think, Sir Lionel Dudley," Prudence said, with a laugh that was almost sarcastic—"don't you think I have my hands full now? I must marry you to an heiress and find a rich husband for her. Neither of you has a penny, and both need a fortune. Yours is to be won by your title, and hers by her face."

The Englishman arose calmly and made her a stiff bow. Then he drew himself up to his full height and passed out of the room.

Prudence winced for an instant, but recovered herself quickly. She smiled scornfully and the fan began to play faster. Then she became grave, and her eyes took on a dreamy expression. Could she be thinking how tall the baronet was, and how crushing his manner when his pride was touched?

She sat for some time very still, and then, starting up with a white face, hurried from the spot.

She kept an eye on Madge after this and did not permit the two to be alone for an instant. She was like a mother to the girl, and it was a sight to see them together. Of the two the elder woman appeared to be the more youthful. She had such a beautiful complexion. It was almost like a child's. A philosopher who had made a study of the subject once declared that to have a good complexion, and to stand well in society, sums up the average woman's ambition.

But Sir Lionel Dudley did not unbend towards his hostess for many days, and he made it a point to be very polite to Madge when in the presence of them both. He was always gallant to her and always the fine gentleman. If he had planned to punish Mrs. Humphrey Provost, he could not have gone about doing so in a better fashion. However, Prudence was too clever to betray her mortification.

Another philosopher once declared that a woman's every fancy hath a tongue, if we only knew how to interpret it. As Madge was quick to note little acts by which people show their feelings, it was next to impossible for Prudence to hide anything from her.

There was a ball at Sherry's, at which these two studied to checkmate each other. The baronet danced with Madge as often as he could, and Prudence sat neglected the better part of the evening.

She saw sights that night that chilled her heart, in spite of her efforts to ignore them. For Madge had suddenly taken a flirting fancy into her head, and was coquetting with the baronet. Prudence bit her lip to conceal her vexation, and the fan spoke volumes. Once, as the couple flung by her, Madge's eyes met hers, and the glance she got warned Prudence she had better be on her guard. Well, what if I did choose to be Lady Dudley? that glance seemed to say. You see I might if I tried, and who is to hinder?

Prudence was very angry at first. She colored slightly, and bit her lip hard. What an ungrateful little traitor she had taken into her camp, to be sure! The glances of the two women began now to talk to each other. Prudence defied, denied, admitted, then begged. Madge was stubborn for a time, but finally promised silence, threw the baronet over, and accepted Jockey Van Hurdle for a partner.

The baronet was annoyed. He put up his monocle and stared at Jockey as if he would annihilate him. When the waltz ended he approached the couple to claim the prize again, but another young man got in ahead of him and led her away, so that he beheld her no more that evening.

Prudence was almost pouting when he finally came back to her.

## CHAPTER II

HAPPILY the time has gone by when Americans and Europeans need quarrel about national vanities. The Atlantic Ocean is nothing but a pond in these days, and the people on both sides of it are well acquainted with each other.

But at the period we are now treating about, the United States had not been recognized as a first-class power and it was not fashionable for foreigners to see any good in our institutions. We were having a quarrel with England that was hurting us in the eyes of the rest of the world, because our cousins took pains to abuse us to everybody. It was something about a swamp down in Central America that was supposed to contain more malaria than any other spot on the face of the earth. Nobody would go there, except for the purpose of experimenting with yellow fever, and nobody cared two straws about it. Nevertheless, the diplomats were congratulating themselves that they saw a chance here to work up an international crisis, and they soon had the two governments at loggerheads over this unhealthy section.

Therefore, before Sir Lionel Dudley reached our shores he had formed prejudices against us.

Nor is this to be wondered at in any case, because it was not so very long ago when the Englishman of the upper class confused the United States with Niagara Falls, and believed the Rocky Mountains were within shooting distance of the metropolis. Even in these more enlightened days the foreigner who permits himself to praise the sky-line of lower New York thinks he has put the natives under obligation to him.

However, it is an open question whether this lack of appreciation was harmful. From the mere fact that Europeans had not discovered us we took pains to discover ourselves, and while we were about it we decided that we are a remarkable people.

Just before the baronet left London somebody told him that all Americans are in trade, except a few who get out of the country. He had been warned what to expect in this land of strenuous hospitality. Americans, he was assured, like to surprise the unsophisticated stranger who seeks their shores with the idea of doing the United States without regard to the immensity of it. Such a man is sure to receive flashlight views of life that are apt to be startling.

Accordingly, when the limelight was turned on him, the baronet simply stuck an eyeglass in his eye and prepared to be impressed. He was looking for something original, don'tcherknow—something in the Indian pow-wow line, and because he did not get it, he decided Americans are a commonplace

sort of a people, much more commonplace than the English themselves.

But he could not fail to make note of their energy, and one day he remarked it to a man he chanced to meet.

"Yes," answered the native, "there is something doing on this continent, all right. Pretty soon there will be something doing on the others. We are getting ready to take hold and run things. We are going to deck this old globe out just swell, and we are going to polish her up so she will want to put on airs to the other planets."

The baronet was so astonished at this remark he could only screw his monocle into his eye and stare into space. He began to suspect now that Americans are not so commonplace, after all. In fact, he decided they would bear a closer study.

Meanwhile, the unceasing round of hospitality went on without abatement, so that he hardly had time to think. He was conducted to the clubs, monocle and all, and, like a lamb led to the slaughter, was turned over to the tender mercy of the professional jester. They told him stories, such as the natives of this land of strenuous freedom can invent. It almost makes an American blush to have to acknowledge what his countrymen are capable of doing in this respect, particularly when they find a victim of the baronet's type. It is positively shocking to have to record the number of jokes this good-natured and not over-brilliant Englishman had to endure. When they discov-

ered that he was ignorant of their ways, they patted themselves to think they had found a listener at last. Everybody got the tip to tell him the yarns they had been keeping in stock, and some bores went into ecstasies over him. They said it was such a pleasure to explain a joke to him. He had managed to grasp several without having to consult a cyclopedia. One wicked wag even told him tales that had no point to them, and he was much edified when the baronet appeared to find them food for reflection. Soon he had succeeded in making himself very popular, and was voted a good fellow by everybody.

One happy day society slowed up on him, so that he had an opportunity to look around and enjoy himself after his own fashion. A new lion was discovered, and, to the Englishman's relief, the limelight was turned on him. Now the baronet began to appreciate New York, and he determined to learn something about Americans as they are, and not as they act in drawing-rooms. Soon he found that people on this side of the Atlantic were not above vanity, but were fond of Europeans who sought their friendship in the right spirit and were willing to see good in republican institutions. Soon, too, the baronet was forced to admit that the United States was all its admirers claimed for it, and he would not have been surprised if he had caught himself in the act of celebrating the Fourth of July.

In striking contrast to this amiable Englishman was the conduct of Mrs. Humphrey Provost's

other guest. Van Whist Bridges was a renegade American and an expatriate from choice. He was willing to admit that he first saw the light of day somewhere in the western continent, but this fact did not prevent him from disliking the United States and its institutions. He had been brought up in Paris, and had acquired the tastes and habits of a European. Indeed, there is good reason for believing that he had accepted some of the vices that prevail in all world centres, under the impression that they stood for cosmopolitanism and real culture. He had met Madge in Paris and admired her. He thought her very *chic*, just like a Frenchwoman, in fact. So, when his mother and Mrs. Humphrey Provost proposed a marriage between these two, he was agreeable to the notion. In fact he authorized his parent to act for him in the matter, with the understanding that he should not be expected to make love to the girl in the American fashion. Now the affair had progressed satisfactorily in every detail, except the trifling one of consulting the young lady's wishes—an Americanism that did not appear to give Mr. Van Whist Bridges any concern. He insisted on being French in everything.

True, there had been some hitch in the matter of the *dot*. He had to be informed that a thing of this kind is not agreeable to Americans, who prefer to think they are marrying for love, even when they are marrying for money. He had consented to waive this point until he came to New

York, when everything was to be arranged satisfactorily. Now, however, he felt it a duty he owed to himself to insist on this important item being settled at once. He was determined to stand on his rights, Americanism or no Americanism.

In fact, he did not hesitate to tell Mrs. Humphrey Provost that he had not come to America to get a mistress. He could get plenty of those in France. He came to get a wife, and it was asking too much if he must court and win her, and stop to consider whether they were in love. In this strange land it appears their Declaration of Independence applies to matrimony even. The women are consulted about it. American girls go so far as to claim the right to choose husbands for themselves. No wonder they have so many divorces in the country!

He decided that Americans are barbarians. They don't even know how to get married, and their ideas of love and affection must have come from the Stone Age. American women make slaves out of their husbands, and are the real rulers of society. American men are a henpecked lot, anyhow.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost had set her heart on this match for private reasons. She had inveigled the young man to New York in the hope she could handle him to better advantage. Frenchmen are past-masters in the art of love-making, although they go about matrimony in a cold-blooded sort of a way. She believed that Van Whist Bridges would rise to the demands of the situation when

he was convinced that matches are arranged differently on this side of the Atlantic. She assured him the American girl expects proof of affection in courtship. You must make love to one right from the start, and prove to her you are trying to marry her for her own sake. Madge would come into a handsome property some day, but she asked him to waive the matter of the *dot* and begin by winning the girl herself.

But here he was obdurate. He considered that he had proved his affection by not insisting about the *dot* before this. Besides, he was not sure that he wanted to marry, anyhow. He was not satisfied in his own mind that he had sowed his wild oats yet. He had gone into this affair in the first place largely to please his mother. Matrimony was not to be taken lightly, from the American standpoint at least. This idea of falling desperately in love with a woman you expect to make your wife was new to him. Why didn't somebody arrange these trivial details as they do in France? The way women are brought up in this country to follow the impulse of their hearts is monstrous. Love and sentiment before marriage! What nonsense! A mere American vulgarism!

In short, Bridges had raised so many excuses on the matter of the *dot* that Prudence was beginning to despair of the match, when Jack Allers appeared and brought affairs to a climax. Prudence was not long in discovering that Bridges irritated Jack Allers, and Allers irritated Bridges.

Jack Allers disliked the Parisian for despising the land of his nativity, and Bridges disliked Jack for his very pronounced Americanism. Now Prudence formed a plan which she put into operation at once. She decided she could use Jack Allers to bait Bridges on. She had found him capable of jealousy and felt sure he would soon get so worked up over Jack as a possible rival that he would be willing to waive the *dot* altogether.

Trust Prudence to play her cards cleverly enough now! Trust her to use Jack Allers for her own ends without exciting his suspicion! It is only just to her to state that she had succeeded in freeing herself from certain superstitions about sentiment, so that she was above such silly nonsense. Love with her would be simply an affinity of ambition, and the Cupid of the Money Bags would be forced to approve her view of the grand passion.

She had Jack Allers to dinner one day, on purpose to pit him against Bridges. It was something of a family affair. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had been asked for Mr. Willoughby's sake. He sat next to her and of course was blind to whatever was going forward. Some of the other guests were in Prudence's plot and could be relied on to ignore things. But perhaps Prudence went too far in opening her campaign. She beamed on Jack Allers as if he were the darling of her soul, and in a way that was calculated to rouse his suspicion of her. One would have thought that she was just wrapped

up in him, whereas she had taken him up on impulse, and scarcely knew who he was.

However, Jack did not refuse to respond to her advances, because he noted that it irritated Bridges to have her smiling upon him. It did not require encouragement to get him to measure himself against the Parisian. Madge was sitting between these two, and Jack was hitting at his rival through her.

It must be confessed that Jack Allers was intensely American in all his prejudices. Besides, he understood this man, because he knew life and had been forced to study some of the worst sides of it. He could see the moral leper in the drawing-room dandy, and he only wondered that Madge did not read his character at a glance and reject his attentions. Jack Allers was too old-fashioned to appreciate her position now. Many of his best friends had said of him that he was a regular Puritan, and they had often commented on his melancholy temperament. The fact is, he was a bookish fellow, and perhaps, like too many scholars, he had a contempt for a narrowing environment. The man that can look back a thousand years cannot be expected to enthuse over events that happened only yesterday. But sometimes learning disillusionments the mind, even as it broadens it. Sometimes it makes us lose faith in the present by comparing it with the failures of the past. The tragedy of human life, it tells us, may become comedy with the lapse of time, and vice-versa. As to the

history of civilization, there has been a great deal of history with very little civilization in it.

It was Prudence herself who started the conversation that gave Jack Allers a chance to air his hobby. As soon as he got going, however, she turned to her other guests and left him to hold forth ostensibly for Madge's benefit, while he was really talking at Bridges. Jack was soon deep in history, proclaiming the past of America for Americans of to-day to venerate.

Bridges opened his eyes wide. This was news to him. He supposed Americans had sense enough to admit that all they had to boast of in the way of culture, at least, they got by going to Europe. Americans were a people of Yesterday, a race of upstarts, who owed everything to the fact that Europe was opened to them. At least so Bridges believed, and it had never occurred to him that any American would have the face to argue otherwise.

But Jack Allers declared to the contrary. He calmly stated that there had been a time when Americans did not go to Europe for their ideals, and he regretted the tendency of a certain class to do so to-day.

Bridges opened his eyes wider at this.

Americans stayed at home, Jack declared, because they respected themselves and wished to be better Americans. They were too proud to imitate Europe to their own detriment.

Bridges felt like laughing. Surely this man must be daft.

"I tell you, Miss Willoughby, Americans owe more to themselves than certain of their critics are willing to admit," Jack was saying now. "If our ancestors had not been self-respecting ladies and gentlemen we would be colonists still. It was the pride of American gentlemen that started our revolution, and if it had not been for this pride that revolution would have degenerated into a reign of terror, just as the French did."

Bridges began to be amused. Gentlemen in America before Europe took Americans in hand! How perfectly absurd!

"Of course there were gentlemen in France, too," Jack said, half ironically; "but the French people threw them over and appealed to the dregs of the populace. The French Revolution started in the slums. Our revolution started in the colonial manor. That is why ours succeeded and the French ended in the despotism of Napoleon."

Bridges condescended to look interested now.

"If our fathers had not been such gentlemen," Jack continued, "we would not have the government we enjoy to-day. You remember how they starved at Valley Forge, when all was lost but honor. Only gentlemen can do that. You remember in the Declaration of Independence they pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor to the people for liberty. Only gentlemen would speak of their honor as sacred."

Bridges smiled. If there was anything he had a contempt for it was American self-esteem.

"You know I am a Philadelphian," Jack continued, "and in slow Philadelphia we have some things we are proud of. We believe in America and its past. It is an education just to walk up Germantown Avenue and study those old houses which line that thoroughfare. They are proof enough that there were ladies and gentlemen in America in the colonial days."

Everybody appeared to be interested now, and Jack seemed to be talking to the entire table. But he was still hitting at Bridges in his quiet fashion.

"It seems to me we need some conservative sentiment to save our society from degeneration in these days, and for that very reason I would have Americans study this past of theirs. One thing is certain—degeneration is not American; it comes to us from outside influences. In fact, it is opposed to our puritanism, and we can repudiate it as decidedly un-American."

Bridges sneered now. This man was brazen-faced enough to insinuate that America was better off without Europe altogether. At this point Madge broke into the conversation.

"But you must admit that we Americans are only transplanted Europeans," she said.

"On the contrary, I deny that statement *in toto*. We are a native race, if you please, as distinct from Europeans as they are from the Asiatics."

Bridges stared at this. Would anybody listen to this fellow now?

"How do you prove that?" Madge asked.

"Let me ask you a question. Are not the people of Europe emigrants from somewhere? Is there a pure native race in Europe itself? To-day we recognize the Germanics and the Latins as two races. But they can be traced to the same source in Asia. How then do we account for the different nationalities in Europe? Simply because different emigrations of the same original race have settled in certain localities, and by isolation produced national types. Now a number of these same nationalities have settled in America at different times. They have united on a different basis and have formed a national type, as distinct as any in Europe."

"I see," Madge said.

But Bridges was too astonished by this way of treating history to notice the interest she was showing Jack Allers now.

Jack was only human, and he could not resist the temptation to have a parting shot at this man.

"Isn't it about time to cry halt on these Americans who go to Europe, hear somebody abuse this country, and return to criticise everything in it?"

Profound silence followed this home-thrust, and every eye was fixed on Jack now.

"Because Europe is not satisfied with itself. It has rejected many things to-day it once held sacred and is quarrelling about some other things it is forced to hang on to. Let Europe settle its own troubles ere Europeans presume to tell us what we ought to do."

## CHAPTER III

THE women of America are responsible for our social system, and everybody is expected to bow down to them. It is a daring thing to brave feminine wrath by criticising American society, as the writer has ventured to do.

He will simply contend, however, that ever since it took on a professional tone it has undergone a great change, and a professionally-fashionable career is becoming more difficult.

Consequently, many very respectable citizens may feel that there is no call for apology because they do not shine among the elect of fashion. They may not have the time to devote to society, nor the talents necessary to win prominence in it.

It was very evident that Jack Allers was pre-destined to be a social failure in spite of the opportunities that were being thrust upon him. He was too sure of his own opinions and too reckless about expressing them. In short, he was one of those unfortunate beings whose manifest destiny it is to pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubboddy-Jones.

Lest the reader be tempted to wonder why he

was tolerated at all, we beg to say again that Prudence had discovered he could be used as a rival to bait Bridges on. Further than this she had no use for him. Then, too, before she could find a chance to drop him an unexpected champion appeared to take his part. It chanced that Sir Lionel Dudley had overheard him speaking up for the American idea, and was much impressed by it. He sought him out later and congratulated him on his patriotism.

"I am so glad to meet an American like you!" the baronet said. "It pleased me very much to hear you defend your own country and its institutions for the benefit of certain people who seek to belittle them."

Jack was not long in discovering that the baronet was a good fellow. The man behind the title was all right. It appeared, too, that this admiration was mutual. When, therefore, the Englishman expressed a desire to get better acquainted with him, Jack invited him to dine at the Mercury Club, and the baronet accepted gladly. The two had a cozy time together over their cigars, and when they parted, Jack Allers felt that he had made a friend of this good-natured nobleman. Soon he had the satisfaction of knowing that the baronet was sounding his praises before Madge herself. He declared that Jack was one of the cleverest men he had met in America, and his ideal of the self-respecting American gentleman. Prudence noted

that Madge seemed highly pleased at this and was very gracious to the Englishman in consequence. Clearly there was much in this girl that needed to be corrected.

For the present, however, the only thing to do was to appear to take a lively interest in Jack Allers, and he suddenly found social honors being thrust upon him. He was invited now to affairs more or less exclusive, and was in the way of attracting the notice of some very nice people. His name would be shoved into a dinner list when somebody else could not be present, and he was accepted as a good man to hold down a chair and pose as a listener for a society bore. If Jack had only been a fair drawing-room strategist there is no telling what he might have been able to make out of these opportunities. Some professionally-fashionable reputations have been built on this kind of patronage. But he was hardly the man to take up society, even in an amateur way, and he did not have the making of a lesser star in him.

It is painful to reflect what chances were wasted on him. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was amazed at such stupidity as Jack betrayed. Bless my soul, he was the most impossible person he had ever met! Talk about throwing pearls before swine! Jack Allers would pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, before she had a chance to find out who he was.

But perhaps Jack Allers was getting more out

of his experience than Mr. Willoughby supposed. He could not fail to note many things that must impress anybody with a sense for appreciating what a noble science that thing we call society has come to be. If he were inclined to be a bit critical of the professionally-fashionable stars he was privileged to meet, it was doubtless because he did not understand the crocodile standard advocated by Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and accepted by Prudence and her friends, however unwittingly. A very clever man declared once that the only way to make an impression on society is by sticking a pin in it, anyhow, so that Jack Allers may be excused if he took a cynical view of the situation. It seemed to him that everybody was simply acting a part and there was no genuineness in anything they did. However, he soon decided that he did not blame them.

For, if society is professional, it must be capable of finesse.

In particular, Jack was privileged to witness the rise of a new star in the social firmament, and the experience could not fail to be edifying. This man, whom he knew slightly, had made a fortune in Wall Street, and was translated from the region of the bulls and bears to the society of the crocodiles. Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller (professionally-fashionable) discovered him and hastened to take possession of him in the name of Mammon. Then Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones very graciously permitted

herself to approve of him, and henceforward he was numbered among the elect.

Jack was invited to several affairs at which this new lion figured; but whether it was to fill out a list or take the curse of newness off him, he could not determine. In any case he was made to feel that this fortunate individual was a star of the first magnitude, and he himself was a mere gaseous nebula, or no star at all.

But when the younger set got together, Jack was more in his element. These fledglings belonged to the bud class, and were just being entered for a professionally-fashionable career, so that they had not yet been corrupted by the refinements of Mammon. It was a relief to meet Charley Poindexter or Dick Twaddleby, and sometimes Jockey Van Hurdle put in an appearance, just to see how the fillies were running. Poindexter was devoting himself to Miss Bangup, and everybody was talking about it. It was something of a sight to behold this handsome couple in a ball-room. Everybody appeared to be watching them, and they were a study in good form. Jack also heard talk of Hamilton Bloodgood's coming marriage. Rumor had it that a bull-pup would be best man at the ceremony.

It is said that for the technique of politeness nobody equals the Turk, only his courtesy must not always be taken seriously. With some such reservation Jack accepted the favors showered upon him now. Were people glad to meet him? Merely a polite form.

Did they express interest in anything he said? Merely a passing whim. Did they permit themselves to become enthusiastic about some trifle? Simply an impression that would be ignored the next moment. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones was right. The crocodile idea was in line with social sentiment. The professionally-fashionable set have their feelings and fancies selected for them, and they are only expected to act up to them. Genuineness would wear them out.

Behold, now, to what philosophical heights we have lifted society in America! Not content with making a profession of it, we have almost succeeded in evolving a science from it, and it is within the possibilities that we may enroll it among the high arts.

The ethics of sham must be taken seriously, it would seem.

However, Jack Allers was in love. It was the hope of seeing Madge that caused him to submit to all this patronage. If he had a chance to exchange a few words with her in the course of an evening, he cared nothing for the condescension of the people he was forced to meet. How eagerly he drank in those few words, and how carefully he recalled them afterwards! He would sometimes lie awake half a night, going over a conversation he had with her and building air-castles, as only people in love can do. It was all delicious, all fascinating, all tantalizing; and of course it was

all vulgar from the standpoint of fashionable sentiment, and the Cupid of the Money Bags would laugh at such nonsense.

Jack Allers was very stern with himself. With puritanical austerity he prescribed heroic treatment for any little weaknesses he fancied he discovered in his character. His sensitiveness made him smile at times, and he had a dignity that was almost morbid. With many people he seemed to take delight in making a poor impression. The whim might take him to paint himself in black colors for no apparent reason. His friends sometimes complained about this. They declared you had to find him out in order to appreciate him. He was a modern Puritan, given to self-immolation and delighting in self-chastisement.

However, if Jack's manner denoted pride, it was the kind of pride that is founded on self-respect. He was one of that type of American gentlemen whose innate refinement must express itself in spite of a democratic environment. This is not class pride; it is something higher and more individualistic. Water seeks its own level, and refinement cannot be ignored because the masses of the people choose to be vulgar.

Once a woman had remarked of him that he was a man with a presence, and Jack took this as a compliment. To have been called handsome would not be so flattering. But to be noticed for a presence that betrayed a refined nature and a dis-

tinguished bearing, was a compliment indeed. Perhaps Jack's stern face forbade such levity.

It was one of his theories that a man should be above weaknesses of all kinds. He prided himself on the fact that he could put himself in the way of temptations and ignore them. He could look vice in the face and sneer at it. He had a contempt for moral cowardice, and now that a great love had come to him and loftier ideals along with it, he despised what he had formerly been satisfied to reject. Jack Allers would have been a merciless judge to a certain class of sinners who are always clamoring for tolerance and preaching against the narrow-mindedness of those who reprove them.

He would be very stern with his love. He would be on his guard lest it got the mastery of him. He might even expect the woman he loved to grow wings and turn angel on demand. Many men are capable of such inconsistency. They seem to think it is their privilege to look for superior beings to meet the requirements of their sentimental ideals. Women have no right to be purely mortal when men choose to worship one of them. If they are altogether human, what is the use of admiring them with such fervor? How can they hope to excite such refined passion if they are merely creatures of flesh and blood? Clearly it is woman's duty to pose as an angelic creature so men can offer her the incense of their adoration.

Jack Allers went so far as to write poetry, just as an outlet to his sentiment. According to

Schiller this is pardonable to lovers, anyhow, and therefore we quote Jack's effusion without apology:

## SWEETHEART

## I

Can't you see with the eyes of love, Sweetheart,  
 What is hidden from other eyes?  
 The soul awakes, and in rapture takes  
 A sense that love supplies—  
 That love alone supplies, Sweetheart,  
 So that none but a lover can see;  
 And the soul's great cry is a little sigh,  
 That is only meant for thee!

Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
 It is only meant for thee!  
 Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
 It is only meant for thee!

## II

Don't you know there's a press of the hand, Sweetheart,  
 That a lover alone can give?  
 And a glance so shy from a love-lit eye,  
 That bids a lover live?  
 That bids a lover live, Sweetheart,  
 For the rapture that is to be;  
 And the crown of bliss is a first warm kiss,  
 That is only meant for thee!

Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
 It is only meant for thee!  
 Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
 It is only meant for thee!

## III

Don't you know there's a part of the soul, Sweetheart,  
 That love alone can reveal?  
 And a burst of joy without alloy,  
 That a lover alone can feel?

That a lover alone can feel, Sweetheart,  
Or know what this joy may be;  
When face to face we two embrace—  
It is only meant for thee!

Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
It is only meant for thee!  
Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
It is only meant for thee!

## IV

Don't you know there's an old, old tale, Sweetheart,  
For lovers to harp upon?  
How two souls fill to a single thrill,  
And two hearts beat as one?  
And two hearts beat as one, Sweetheart,  
In blissful ecstasy;  
I have dreamed of bliss, but this, oh this!  
It is only meant for thee!

Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
It is only meant for thee!  
Sweetheart! Sweetheart!  
It is only meant for thee!

## CHAPTER IV

NONE appreciate the failings of New York like those who love it best. America was a game of grab from the day of its discovery, and it is a game of grab to its children still. In America's metropolis the game is carried to its limit. Only experts can hope to hold their own there.

In Jack Allers' opinion there were just two parts to New York City—the Wall Street district, where there was always something doing, and the Waldorf district, where there was always something to do. He often represented himself to his friends as a Wall Street hobo, by courtesy a broker. He had an office in a huge building which was a community to itself, and here he labored during banking hours; but when the underworked servants of Mammon were relinquishing the street to the scrub-woman and the office janitor he hurried up to the club district, where the real work of the day commenced. Or perhaps it would be proper to say the work of the night; for the revelry of pleasure thrives best on gaslight. Once he got mixed up in a panic in Wall Street that was carried into the club district, and kept up until the stock exchange opened the next morning. But such chances to see a tragedy of

modern life with all its comic accomplishments were rare, and Jack made the most of them. This panic swept the financial world off its feet for about thirty-six hours, and at one time threatened to bring on chaos. To attempt to describe all that happened during this brief but exciting period would call for the genius of a Doré or a Hogarth, according as a man felt inclined to view it from a tragic or a ludicrous standpoint. It was capable of either interpretation, and Jack did not know whether to laugh or cry over it. Frenzied men, having screamed themselves hoarse on the floor of the exchange, fell back on their fists and pummeled and mauled each other like prize-fighters. Some of them rushed out into the street and fought in the gutter. Hats were smashed, coats torn, and faces disfigured. Then, the exchange having been declared closed, they threw themselves into cabs and hurried uptown to renew the conflict.

Meanwhile the newspapers were exhausting the vocabulary attempting to impress on the public the peril that the nation was facing. From the agonized cry they sent up there was reason to believe that the reporters themselves had been caught on the wrong side of the market.

But the uptown exchange was conducted very decorously.

A stranger happening into one of the leading hotels or a club that evening, would have found either place crowded with well-groomed men and might have fancied a social gathering in the stag

line was taking place. He would never suspect that the panic was on here too, and that this was the stock exchange in evening dress. He would remark how polite and courteous every one was, and what good humor reigned. This crowd, he would say, is a very congenial one, and is here to have a pleasant time. But he could not fail to note that every man carried a small book, and while they entertained each other in this pleasant fashion they would keep scribbling in an absent-minded way. How was he to know that one of these men was figuring on the fortune he had lost, and another on the fortune he had won? How was he to suspect that of those two talking and smiling over a bottle, the one was crying quarter from the other who had him at his mercy? Better than Wall Street loves a winner, it admires a good loser.

One day Jack made a discovery that startled him. He saw a skyscraper going up in the Wall Street district, and on making inquiry, was informed that it was being erected on property belonging to the Willoughby estate. Moreover, the man who imparted this information gave him to understand that the money to build it was being raised by the estate. Clearly, then, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby could claim membership in the gilded order of millionaires.

Jack was puzzled to account for all this wealth in a man who had lived so economically, and when he investigated further he learned something more about the private affairs of his relative. It seemed

the Willoughby estate had rented its property long ago at cheap rates for these days and on long leases. This had kept it poor, but now as these leases were expiring it would soon have a princely income.

There could be no doubt of it. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was a millionaire. He had hung on to a lot of property because it belonged to his grandfather, for sentimental reasons. The unpretentious way in which he had lived, the rigid economy he had always practiced, had been necessary to him once. He was so full of family pride he had been willing to stint himself in order to save the family acres. Now he was to have his reward. He belonged to the aristocracy of Mammon. He was bound to receive the homage that dollars command in this land of the over-rich, and could take high rank among the plutocrats. Who will say money is not the dispenser of all joys in these days? Money is the modern god, and the dollar mark is fast becoming a sacred emblem.

It was a question with Jack what the effect of this wealth might be on Mr. Willoughby. He had always had a sneaking respect for his refinements, even when sorely tempted to laugh at his foppery. He was a rare specimen of the old-fashioned gentleman one does not often see, and Jack had a weakness for the old-fashioned standards. But what effect would wealth have on him?

And Madge? Ah, she was his heir, and would

be very rich some day. How far she seemed from him now!

He grew angry at society once again. What is it preaching but money worship, anyhow? It tries to set up a standard of refinement, gloss it over, but its avarice is as vulgar as the vulgarest. Look at these society belles! Nothing appeals to them except a bank account. The Cupid of the Money Bags does not believe in sentiment. The kind of romances he is interested in is not of the Romeo and Juliet order. What does he care for hearts? He is peeking into pocket-books to see if the game is worth bagging. Soon they will be teaching that avarice is superior to love itself.

There is reason to believe that Jack Allers was passing into that moody state young people sometimes experience when they suffer from unrequited affection.

He could see Madge being offered up on the shrine of Mammon, and the thought maddened him. In this age the finest women are schooled to sell themselves for gold into wedlock, and they are shameless about it. So he argued, and he began to fear that Madge would yield to the influences around her in spite of everything. Of course, he did not care about himself; lovers never do. He did care for her, and for her only. Why did not her family warn her against the temptations of a brilliant marriage? In Jack's eyes, every man in New York might be as madly in love with her as he was. Who was this Mrs. Humphrey Provost,

anyhow? What was the secret of her power over the girl? Jack could not make anything out of her. He was beginning to suspect that she was his enemy. Where did she come from? Who was she? There were stories whispered to her discredit, that anybody might hear. She appeared to be wrapped up in Madge, but was her influence on the girl for good? He had heard it said she was a very clever woman, but heartless. Evidently a good party to make a Mammonite out of a young lady who was capable of better things. Jack determined to study her, and try to know the real woman behind the society mask.

One day, as he was hurrying along Wall Street, he noticed a handsome woman come out of a building and hurry to a carriage, while a well-known banker obsequiously pushed his way to the curb behind her. Jack stared. The woman was Mrs. Humphrey Provost!

Fortunately, she did not recognize him. She was so taken up with the banker she did not raise her eyes. The two conversed together for a moment, and then the carriage drove away.

Jack walked off, musing, his curiosity getting the better of him. What was she doing here? he kept asking himself. What was her errand? At last he decided to find out.

He knew one of the clerks in this same banking house, and he determined to sound him in the matter. It was very easy to get him out to lunch, but it was hard to pump him about anything relating

to the firm's clients. Jack described Mrs. Humphrey Provost to him, noting the incident and promising secrecy. Assured that the matter would go no further, the young man finally consented to enlighten him. He was a facetious youngster, and spoke of his employer as "his nibs."

"That woman! I will tell you, my boy. I don't know her name, mind, and I don't want to know it. But I can guess she is one of the way-ups, all right. Well, sir, she knows business, and, what is more, she has heavy interests in the Street. I know she is worth a million or two, and she may have more. His nibs crawls to her, and when his nibs crawls to any man or woman there is something in it, and you can gamble on those. If all women had as much business sense as she has, they could afford to support a husband."

"You amaze me!" Jack cried. "What does it mean?"

"It means, my son, that in her case the new woman has 'came.' All I can say is, that if they are like her, yours truly is looking for a wife to take care of him. This beauty has been coming down to the Street for years now, without anybody being the wiser for it. It means that she is a stockholder in several large corporations, and prefers to look after her own interests, instead of trusting them to some man who might cheat her, or try to make her believe the moon is made of green cheese. But, come, we must not spy on a lady. It would not be polite, you know."

Jack Allers was dazed. He often had occasion to note what a beautiful creature Mrs. Humphrey Provost was—one of the most beautiful he had ever beheld. He had often watched her in the effort to study the woman behind the society mask, but this was a revelation that rather staggered him.

That very evening it chanced that he was attending a party at which Mrs. Humphrey Provost was creating no little attention by her wit and beauty. He saw her the center of attraction in a crowd that was made up of fine men and handsome women, easily outshining them all. Certainly there was nothing unwomanly about her now. She was brilliant, charming, lovable, a very queen of the drawing-room. One would be apt to think of her as a gentle creature that needed protection against the slings and arrows of fortune. But who would suspect that among her other accomplishments she possessed talents that a financier might envy?

Jack Allers was old-fashioned in many of his ideas, and this woman amazed him. He watched her very closely that evening, and the impression he got of her fairly made him thrill. Heavens! What a creature! How womanly, and yet how bold and daring! Is there anything she need stop at? Was there anything she could not be if she chose? Her beauty was simply irresistible, and her manner—those things that move the ear to music, and the voice to break out into song; those things that thrill the senses, and persuade the heart to love; those things that raise the soul above the

limitations of the flesh—all these were stamped on that woman's fair brow.

Was she dangerous, or was she, too, a woman, and therefore to be won? Or perhaps, after all, she was only in love with herself. Jack noticed how she always greeted him with a counterfeit smile, such as only a society woman can assume; she understood the technique of the drawing-room, all right. When and how to excite admiration, when and how to rouse interest, when and how to be amusing—all these she knew. Manner can be assumed, it need never be real; but it must be correct to keep up the deception.

Jack had heard whispers of her unhappy marriage. Suppose, now, the blame was not all her husband's, although he was said to be a degenerate? It did not seem possible that a man could have a wife like that and be indifferent to her. It might be she was at fault, perhaps.

But Jack cautioned himself not to be too hard on her. He was in no position to judge her, and he did not wish to be intolerant. He was always preaching liberality to himself on the score of charity, and he felt there was need of it in these days. There are too many people in the world who do not know what temptation is themselves and cannot allow for it in others. Their lives have been hammered down into a rut of self-denial, so that they could not escape from it if they tried. Perhaps they would not be averse to a little quiet sinning if their sphere of activity were not so lim-

ited. As it is, they are in danger of becoming bigoted in their theories of virtue.

In America, where woman is queen, we pride ourselves on our chivalry. The man American is long-suffering and of great patience in his dealings with womankind. He hates kings and despots, but is ready to bow down to the tyranny of a petticoat. He is living in the hope that the American girl will rebel against Europe some day and give her heart to America alone. Perhaps then she will want to build a monument to the American man.

During the panic Jack was too busy with his own affairs to pay attention to anything else. But one day, when things had calmed down and assumed the former routine of dullness, he saw Mrs. Humphrey Provost leave the same banking house. Her face was radiant, and there was a light of triumph in her eyes.

Jack met the clerk later.

“Well?”

“She won. Her deal went through. She was in it with his nibs, and on the ground floor, too. They took a big chance, but stood in to make a big haul. That woman is a financier! She is worth five millions now, if she is worth a cent!”

Jack Allers gave a long whistle by way of comment on this intelligence.

But the reader is more fortunate than Jack Allers in this connection. He is privileged to know that Prudence had not been championing certain millionaires, who were anxious to get into society, for

nothing, and this was their way of paying her for services rendered. Jack's friend had exaggerated somewhat. She had not been dabbling in finance for a number of years. This thing was new to her, and she was acting on hints furnished by certain new people who had been accepted among the professionally-fashionable set by her efforts. Neither was she as rich as the young man said. Nevertheless, she had a bank account now that some millionaires would not sneer at.

## CHAPTER V

AMERICA is the land of the feminine leader. Therefore we must expect to produce the feminine snob. If it is true that the Lord made the first woman, it goes without arguing that she must have been a perfect creature. But the devil may have been turning out counterfeits of her ever since. At least, this is the explanation one is tempted to give in order to account for certain weaknesses that the fair sex has developed under modern culture.

Even a man in love cannot be blind to some of these. Infatuated as he was, Jack Allers began to be fearful that Madge was not strong enough to resist the snares of Mammon that were laid so cleverly for her. If the girl trusted to her own conscience he had no fear of the result; but she was not above vanity, and her head might be turned by flattery, like many other women's.

Something told him that Mrs. Humphrey Pro-vost was exerting a bad influence over the girl. He realized what the peril was if this were true. Prudence was so clever it would be hard work to counteract her. He was satisfied that she was his enemy, and therefore he despaired for himself.

Not but what she was always polite to him—that

was just the trouble. Her suavity hid her hate. Jack chafed as he thought how this woman was damning him by faint praise. Here he was made to look contemptible, and unable to defend himself. His only hope was that Madge would tire of this refined bullying, and be moved to take his part. In any case, he would have to ignore it.

But Jack's fears were groundless, so far as Madge was concerned. She was beginning to have an admiration for him. It chanced one day that she met a noted savant at a woman's club, and she quoted something to him that Jack had told her. The man was charmed. He had always understood that American girls were clever—this one was learned. He spoke to his hostess about her afterward, complimenting her very highly.

Madge was in great glee. Evidently Jack was a man worth quoting. She decided that she ought to see more of him, if only to get ideas out of him. One afternoon she chanced to spy him strolling on Fifth Avenue, in the neighborhood of the park. She followed him until she caught up with him, and then she made him walk with her.

"Why have you been keeping away from me lately?" was her abrupt greeting.

"Have I?"

"Indeed, you have! I have missed you, too. Doesn't that flatter you? I need not ask what you have been doing with yourself. You are always serene."

"Now you do flatter me. I like to be thought a strong character."

"Does anybody question it?"

"Once I was told I had a weak will. That was when I was younger. I flatter myself that could not be said now, however."

"You weak! I can't imagine it!"

"They couldn't say so now. Character-building is one of my hobbies."

"What is your rule?"

"It sums up in the old Greek saying, 'Know thyself.' "

"But you are a man."

"Yes, but I have all the limitations of manhood. Men crave for the experiences of life, you know. Women are satisfied with——"

"What?"

"I was going to say love. I will make it society."

"Oh!"

The scene about them was a brilliant one, and Madge seemed to be in perfect harmony with it. Jack noticed how well she carried herself. When she walked it looked as if her whole body was a spring.

"You don't believe in love, then?"

"Certainly."

"As how?"

"Once upon a time a maiden fell in love with the only son of the president of a big trust. She said to him: 'I could share a trust with you, and be happy.' "

“And how about matrimony?”

“I think I have read the secret of man’s fall in that connection. The devil whispered matrimony to Eve in Eden. He showed her how Adam would have to support her, and she could get alimony later. Then we fell.”

“I see you are getting to be socially orthodox. I shall begin to have hope of you now. But I don’t like frivolous talk from you. I hear too much of that, as it is. Tell me something serious. What have you been thinking about lately?”

“I have been moralizing on the problem of modern life, and have reached the conclusion there is not enough sentiment in it.”

“How is that?”

“I claim that Americans of to-day only care for America of the present, and consequently they have become very selfish and mercenary. They have thrown the America of the past behind them, with its traditions and its ideals, and they don’t consider the America of the future, either. One excuse for this is the number of emigrants in the country. You can’t expect these newcomers to care for the America of the past when it is new to them. The natives, who should have sentiment on this head, have rejected it in the competition with these newcomers. Now the America of the present is the richest country on the face of the earth. Taking America unsentimentally, everybody is trying to get its wealth, regardless of principle. At last, things have reached a scandalous stage, and we must go back to the tra-

ditions of the fathers. That is to say, we must put more sentiment and more patriotism into modern life."

"If sentiment were to be in order, women would have their real opportunity, wouldn't they?" Madge said. "We are supposed to be better at sentiment than men."

"You are right. But women have a field already. It is society. We must teach sentiment to men. These practical fellows say sentiment doesn't pay—there is no money in it. Sentiment does pay. There is something more precious than money in it—there is the life of the nation."

"You are always convincing. Your ideas of practical sentiment are good. But how about the real article?"

"Let me tell you something," Jack replied. "I am willing to admit that there are many things in womanhood that I do not understand. I am asking myself now if women understand what manhood is. If a man marries a fine woman, isn't it her fault if he does not become a fine man?"

"Another one of your hobbies?"

"Yes, and I have many such. The other day I met a charming woman. She is a power among the women's clubs. Everybody that comes in contact with her feels her wonderful personality. She is married. I told myself I must see her husband just once, then I would know whether she was capable of making a gentleman out of a man."

"Well?"

"I have met her husband. He entered the room with a manner that impressed me at once. He acted as if he were being ushered into his wife's presence, to be presented to her friends. The greeting he gave me pleased me very much. Now that fine woman understands what a fine man should be, and her husband is proof of it."

"If you had a wife?" Madge asked.

"If I had a wife, I would expect her to make a finer man of me."

"Look at that turnout! Isn't it stunning!" Madge interrupted.

But Jack could only look at her.

"I read your character differently at times," he continued. "I am afraid the life you are now leading engrosses you too much. I almost fear you will have to meet with some unpleasant experience to bring out the best that is in you."

"You really think I need such?"

"I don't know. There comes a period in all our lives when we sit in judgment over ourselves. I hope yours won't come as the result of a sudden shock."

"Do you think society so frivolous that it is corrupting?"

"I am afraid I do. I attended the opening night of the opera this year, and, of course, I was fascinated by the sight. I had a seat where I could study the audience, and I became so interested I forgot what was going on outside the boxes. Here is American society, I told myself. Where in the

world could this display be equaled? But, on sober second thought, I questioned if it were not a bit sensational and too spectacular. The operatic stars were being overshadowed by society queens. People forgot whether a *prima donna* was in good voice in the excitement of seeing some woman make a hit with a new gown. There was just a touch of outstaging the stage in it all. At least, so it impressed me."

"But what kind of society would you have?"

"Ah! There is a question for a woman to put me on my mettle. Society in America is woman's world. Business is man's. We cannot get along without society, any more than we can get along without women. Now let me think. It is very daring in me to presume to dictate to woman's kingdom. There are some very nice people living in New York on small incomes. I visit a few. I find them very refined and truly cultured. Their names never get into the papers in any connection, and they would not care to have them. They come up to my ideals."

"You are for a conservative element, then?"

"I dislike these people who go to Europe, and then come home to discover their own country. I know a few such. I have hopes one of them will discover the Mississippi River shortly. De Soto did it once, but of course that doesn't count."

"I fear you are a regular Puritan, as everybody says."

"Now you compliment me. Now I am on my

real hobby. Puritanism is the foundation-stone of the American character. It stands for what is down under the skin and is bred into the bone of us all. Let the pessimists croak their dismallest, there is something in Americans that stays. Puritan, and son of a Puritan, and proud of it! There you have it. In spite of the restlessness of modern life, in spite of the discontent of modern society, Americans have a chart to sail by. We are not the kind of race to put on sackcloth and ashes and cry 'Mis-  
erere!' while the deluge sweeps over us. When the saltiness of the American character shall have lost its savor, with the Puritanism of our forefathers it shall be salted again."

"Here we are at the hotel," Madge said. "You must come in and take dinner."

## BOOK VI

### CHAPTER I

SURELY, anyone who is able to reveal the inner workings of society to the uninitiated may pose as a public benefactor. The process of beatification by which new people are enrolled among the elect, cannot fail to be interesting. It does not follow, however, because an author can introduce his readers in high quarters that he claims to be an authority on matters so technical.

The ethics of sham are a study in themselves, and the social mysteries are only known to those who have made them their life work. Indeed, it is suspected that fashion purposely changes its calendar from time to time just to confuse the unregenerate.

Furthermore, the writer can plead that he is only a man, and why should any male creature presume to set himself up as a specialist here? It is well known that society is woman's realm, and she is responsible for its conventional tone.

Even Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was willing to concede that his knowledge of it was limited. To

his thinking, the way to acquire a professionally-fashionable reputation was to win the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and try not to pass out of her memory. However, he was not recommending this plan to everybody, because of its dangers.

Let us try to look the situation squarely in the face. The over-rich must have a profession to take up their time, and exploit their talents. What is the matter, therefore, with a professional society? Having established it themselves, it is only natural that they should seek to monopolize it and keep outsiders from their chosen field.

Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had very advanced ideas on this subject. She believed that society would have to be syndicated some day, in order to hold its different sets together.

But if there must be more light on this refined science, perhaps it would be well to call attention to the crocodile system. For by its aid any aspirant can hold himself above the snubs and heartburns that beset the road which leads to favor.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had accepted it now, and he found it a great comfort to him. A man of his fine feelings could not fail to be moved by the tribulations of the over-rich which he was forced to witness daily. The pathetic efforts of these unfortunates to get happiness out of life when they had exhausted the gamut of luxury—who could behold these things unmoved? Crocodile sympathy was what these people needed, and he was ready to offer them any amount of it.

When some aristocratic woman would unbosom herself to him, bewailing her hard lot because luxuries had been piled upon her until they had become nauseating, what but crocodile stoicism enabled Mr. Willoughby to hear her tale of woe? A shock of real feeling might be serious in such a case, but by schooling himself to feel only the crocodile kind, he was proof against morbidness.

Dainty ladies were pouring into his ears their crocodile despairs, and he was cheerfully giving them all the crocodile pity they yearned for. Bow-wow tragedies, that would melt a heart of stone, were brought to his notice, and except that he disliked dogs, even crocodile fortitude might have failed him at this point. One woman informed him, with tears in her eyes, that her dear, darling doggie had refused to eat chicken livers, after stuffing himself with them until he was in danger of suffocation. Mr. Willoughby found that he was constantly having calls for crocodile emotion, that must be pumped up at a moment's notice, and he soon learned to respond to this demand. It was twang the harp, more tears—crocodile tears, of course—whether it be about a pup's appetite or a domestic tragedy.

Truly, the burdens of the over-rich are hard to bear!

Mr. Willoughby took a crocodile delight in his experiences now, and he worked himself up to heights of crocodile rapture that were surprising. One day he attended a bow-wow reception, at which

the guests were led in by a groom at the end of a dog chain, and, on being presented to the hostess, barked. Everything served on this occasion was in the shape of a bone.

But it was in gossip that he found his greatest delight, and a crocodile memory was right in his line. He could be deeply moved by anything confided to him, and forget all about it the next moment. Those awful scandals, too, how delicious they were when viewed from a crocodile standpoint! Mr. Willoughby heard reputations torn to pieces, and only smiled. He showed a proper appreciation of crocodile penance also. When Mrs. Highroller expressed contrition for some of her actions he was deeply touched by this ingenuous outburst of crocodile remorse. Of course, he did not expect her to be putting on sackcloth and ashes because of it. He realized that it was only a crocodile pricking of the conscience that caused her to speak as she did, and she would forget about it five minutes afterward.

In short, thanks to the crocodile idea as proclaimed by Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, society could order its feelings very much as it did its clothes.

However, Mr. Willoughby could not claim all the honors as a crocodile now. Mrs. Humphrey Provost was running him neck-and-neck, and succeeded in duping some very incredulous people. One stupid party, to whom she had gone with her tale, believed she really meant it when she said she desired a reconciliation with her sister-in-law. She

even went so far as to write Mrs. Saltearth, describing how society had gone over to Prudence, and how everybody, on hearing her story for the first time, believed her a persecuted woman. She then implored Mrs. Saltearth to try to make her brother return to the wife who was pining for him, and closed with a glowing account of the way Prudence was carrying the town.

The effect of this astonishing piece of information was to cause Mrs. Saltearth to cut her trip short and hurry to New York as fast as railroad and steamer could carry her. But what an America she was returning to! She had left it an acknowledged rival of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself; she came back to find the town against her. Her most trusted friends hurried to her with the startling intelligence that it would be impossible to crush her sister-in-law as easily as she had hoped. Prudence had proved herself necessary to certain people, and would be sure to put up a strong fight. They all cautioned her to be careful how she acted, and some of the boldest hinted that it would be well for her to cloak her real feelings and appear to accept the situation.

Mrs. Saltearth was too dazed to know just what to do at first, and while she hesitated Prudence made a shrewd move that further strengthened her position. She held out the olive branch very tactfully, taking care to let everybody know that she had offered to forget her wrongs. It was Mr. Willoughby himself who acted as emissary and made

the advances that were to heal the breach in the family. It goes without saying that he comported himself well under such trying circumstances, because Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones begged him to do so. He was somewhat dazed when his overtures were rejected. In his opinion it was folly to oppose Prudence now. Bless my soul! hadn't Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones recognized her! Until she passed out of her memory, it betrayed a weak mind to quarrel with her.

However, if Prudence had called in person, instead of sending a third party to act for her; perhaps if she had sought to mollify the wrath of her enemy, something might have been accomplished. But who shall say that this was what Prudence desired? Her move was certainly a clever one, but was it sincere? It was calculated to win her the good opinion of disinterested parties, and if her offer should be rejected, Mrs. Saltearth could be blamed for choosing war when she might have had peace.

Moreover, Mrs. Saltearth was so lost in admiration of her rival's boldness she might have consented to be friendly if Prudence had approached her openly and showed her sincerity. For her sister-in-law almost forgot her hate for the moment in her amazement at the things Prudence had been able to do in the face of great obstacles. On first impulse, she was tempted to get up before everybody and applaud the woman who had outgeneraled her so cleverly.

This adventuress, who had raised herself from nothing, and through a fortunate marriage had found an opportunity, had actually succeeded where so many, more happily situated, had failed! She was a genius. There was no other explanation for it. She was a genius, and the chances she had taken were amazing. How had she dared? But the reader will understand that Prudence was a far cleverer woman than some stupid people, Mrs. Saltearth among the number, had supposed.

To Mrs. Saltearth, society was life itself, and anybody that could handle it like this was worthy of her esteem. As she looked about her and saw how complete Prudence's triumph had been, she had difficulty in controlling her feelings. We repeat, if Prudence had only come frankly to her now—

But this was not Prudence's plan. Hers was not the meek and gentle nature that forgives past insults or forgets past slights. She hated Mrs. Saltearth with an implacable fury. From her she had received nothing but contemptuous treatment all these years, and the iron had entered into her soul. She would go to any length to humble her, and once sure of her own position, her next craving was for revenge. Just for one chance to crush her, as she herself had been crushed, ere now, she would be willing to resign her dearest hopes and ambitions. But there was no danger that she would commit some act of folly in her vindictiveness; she was too clever for that. She was biding her time. When

the proper moment came she would throw her husband over and make him appear as contemptible as possible, just to bring mortification on his family; just to show the world that he had never been anything but a puppet in her hands.

It is not nice to contemplate such a nature as Prudence possessed, and we are not holding it up as an example to others. We prefer to believe in the doctrine that the meek shall inherit the earth. But while Mammon rules society, those excellent maxims which countless generations of good people have tried to live up to are likely to be thrown aside for the beatitudes of Hell, in order to proclaim the virtue of selfishness and the triumph of hate.

Consequently, the reader will understand why it was that the psychological moment to heal this unhappy difference was lost, and society forced to reap a bitter harvest afterward.

## CHAPTER II

WE must search history for examples of heroism, in order to find a parallel to Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, permitting herself to be worried about these matters. She stands forth, at this crisis, a pathetic figure indeed. The air was full of rumors of social schisms. Outsiders were going about proclaiming new things, and the elect were like sheep without a shepherd. Still, she does not lose faith in herself. Perhaps she had suffered too much for society already to be easily frightened. She realizes that she is its last hope now.

None but a crocodile can do justice to her. The reader is warned that it would be advisable to pump up only crocodile sentiment in her behalf. Genuine feeling might prove fatal to some sensitive souls in this connection.

She was human, but crocodile stoicism had fortified her for this ordeal, and only once did she seem to give way to weakness of any kind. There was a rumor that Mrs. Wholepush had usurped her place as society's real leader, and many people were being led astray by such vain boasting. When this startling piece of intelligence came, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones lost temper for a moment. She permitted

herself to remember that she had met a person named Mrs. Wholepush, but for the life of her could not recall just who she was. If the reader chooses to take this as proof that she could be moved to show emotion under certain circumstances, he is welcome to do so.

Otherwise, she gave no sign of the fearful anxiety she was enduring.

Could it be possible that she found comfort in the friendship that Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was able to offer her at this time? He was very devoted, seeking to make up for the indifference of others, who were too much occupied with these factional fights to pay attention to her. He even went so far as to thrust himself in the way of these wranglings, although by nature he shrank from quarrels under all circumstances. But, for that matter, if Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had asked him to do so, he would have charged into the cannon's mouth.

He had nothing to comfort him for his pains except the gratitude of his patroness; on the contrary, he met with an experience in this connection that pained him very much indeed.

He called on Mrs. Saltearth one day, in the hope of making her listen to reason. He insinuated as delicately as possible that she was hurting her own cause by her conduct, and he showed her that society was likely to suffer if she persisted in it. As proof how grave the situation had become, it was only necessary to state that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had

permitted herself to worry over it, and asked him to plead with her.

But Mrs. Saltearth was obdurate. She had mastered the situation by this time, and understood that Prudence was only seeking to humiliate her. She was in a rage with her for coming to New York at all, and said so. It was understood that she was to remain away from the city altogether. Mrs. Saltearth considered it her duty now to expose this brazen-faced creature until everybody appreciated her real character.

Then she turned with some petulance to Mr. Willoughby, and fell to upbraiding him. He had been this woman's friend, and had gone sponsor for her before. Let him look to it that she packed up and got out of town at once. She was nothing but an adventuress, and very likely her record would hardly bear scrutiny.

Mr. Willoughby was willing to ignore this show of temper because it was unjust to himself. But when Mrs. Saltearth defied his kind patroness in the very next breath, he had hard work to control himself.

"I shall not seek advice in this matter," Mrs. Saltearth declared, with something like a sneer. "Neither do I recognize the right of others to offer it to me. What has Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones to do with this affair, anyhow? Who is Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, I would like to know!"

Mr. Willoughby was glad to get out of that house before it fell about his ears. If the earth

had opened and swallowed it at these words, he would not have been surprised. Bless my soul! It must be that Mrs. Saltearth had gone out of her mind!

Mr. Willoughby could scarcely suppress a shudder as he hurried away from that accursed spot.

Defy Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones!

He could not trust himself to think.

The time had come for him to assert himself at last. Now he would show the world what he was made of.

No knight of old was ever more inspired by the call of chivalry than he was at this moment. He hurried at once to his patroness, reported the failure of his mission, and then found voice to tell her how Mrs. Saltearth had had the temerity to question her power.

But Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones received the news in a way that thrilled him.

"Ah, my friend," she said sadly, "I told you I am a martyr. Now you will believe it."

Then she announced that she would graciously permit herself to treat the incident as if it had not occurred.

Mr. Willoughby was overcome.

He believed a social anarchy was impending.

If so, it was ushered in not long afterward by an incident that was somewhat dramatic.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost happened to be entering a ball-room one evening, when she came face to face with her sister-in-law. Prudence was bear-

ing herself like a woman that has grown accustomed to triumphs now, and perhaps her manner irritated her rival. A prominent society man was tripping at her dainty heels, and she was smiling and bowing to everybody. Suddenly she faced Mrs. Saltearth.

The latter's nose went up in the air in an instant. She gave a little sniff, and a mocking laugh, as much as to say: "Does this person presume to address herself to me?"

Prudence was still smiling, and looked unconcerned.

Now there were male creatures at this gathering, and every one of them felt a chill run down his spine at this moment. "How cold it is!" they murmured, as they turned up their collars, and one man actually started to get an overcoat.

But the ladies were not one bit startled, and it must be confessed that they put the men to the blush on this occasion. Each of them seized the male nearest her, and began to talk courage into him.

Prudence shrugged her shoulders, and frowned in a manner that boded no good to the woman who had rejected her last overture of peace, and then moved on.

It is a matter of record that half an hour after the above incident had been forgotten by every woman present a male creature was discovered studying the thermometer, in the effort to ascertain how many degrees the mercury dropped when this reconnoiter took place.

## CHAPTER III

WITH the coming of Lent, society hastened to put on the mask of piety, and was giving itself up to religious dissipation, by way of doing penance for its frivolity. The season just closed had been a brilliant one, and it was hardly to be expected that people would submit to sackcloth and ashes all at once, unless they did so in a hypocritical fashion. Wasn't it a touching sight now to behold crocodiles admitting that all flesh is grass, and the joys of Mammon only vanity and vexation of spirit? Even Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones permitted herself to renounce the devil and all his works until the reign of pleasure began again.

Neither is it reasonable to assume that a young woman who had made her first season would search her conscience, and ask herself whether the life she had been leading was all it appeared to be. Madge had been a belle at many a fashionable gathering; her name had been in the papers, and she had been flattered and complimented until her head was almost turned. Like a sensible girl, she gave herself up to dreams of happiness, and refused to argue about life at all.

Wasn't it glorious! Just like a fairy tale—all

bliss and rapture! It would have been unnatural if she had not been carried off her feet by her own triumphs.

The modern Eve, it seems, can be tempted of Mammon, even as the first Eve was tempted of his father, the devil. Society has its standards of culture, and some of them may be false. It has discovered a process for taking out of the human heart all natural feeling, and putting a false sentiment in its place. All this Mammon has done without any aid from science. What woman, if she were offered a professionally-fashionable reputation, would have the courage to reject it, even though she had to sacrifice some scruples? There are people in the world who regard cupidity and covetousness as real virtues, and the dollar-mark is as sacred in their eyes as the cross is to the Christian.

Yes, Madge had had a great triumph. She had been a belle. What young woman could ask for more? A belle with a career before her! Her head was fairly turned by her success, and she could think of nothing else but the gayety, the excitement, the glamor. They had become the very breath of life to her.

It seemed ages ago since she was living in Heathdale, and much that related to her former life was forgotten now. Mammon had won her, and perhaps he had found her too easy a victim to his wiles.

One day she chanced to meet Jack Allers, and promised to be at home one evening, if he would

call. She laughingly told him that she had decided to keep Lent for the benefit of her friends, who complained that they never could get a chance to see her. She would receive all who cared to come at the hotel, where her uncle was stopping.

Poor Jack was too far gone by this time to note the hint that this witticism implied. He simply lost his head at sight of her. It seemed to him that he had never seen her looking so well. High life, he owned, agreed with her.

After she had left him, however, he was sorry he had accepted the invitation. He wanted to go all too badly, but—— He grew hot with anger all at once. He owed it, as a duty to himself, not to go near her. He ought to try to forget her, to steel his heart against her charms. Her friends had formed ambitious plans for her. Why should he try to make himself unhappy running after her? He would send her a note, and beg off.

But, alas! for his resolution. He lay awake several nights before the momentous one, and tried to argue the matter out with himself. Each night, ere he fell asleep, he had promised himself not to keep the engagement, and had assured himself he was going to forget her; and yet each morning the battle began all over again, and he was beaten. In the end he went.

But it was not the self-possessed Jack Allers of old that presented himself at Mr. Willoughby's apartments on that eventful evening. A more dejected, nervous young fellow it would have been

hard to find. He fairly trembled when he was ushered into Madge's presence, and he owned to himself with a sinking heart that he was hopelessly in love. But he felt that he was not in love with the straightforward, womanly girl he had once known, but had fallen into the snares of a frivolous society butterfly.

Yes, Madge was all that, as the result of a few brief months spent in the social whirl. Jack saw a change had taken place in her, and he almost cursed himself for a fool. His manner was brusque, and he was acting very much like a man who felt out of his class. He was in love, there was no doubt of that. For when a young man will sit moodily admiring a young lady's hair, and when he contemplates with emotion the whiteness of her throat, and when he will follow her about with his eyes every time she makes a move, and blush when caught in the act—what other explanation can anyone give, except to say that he is in love, and, being in love, he is permitted to make as much of a fool of himself as he wishes?

Unfortunately, too, Jack Allers felt like a fool, and was convinced he was acting like one. But he could not control himself, in spite of all. He wished he had not come, and yet he wanted to stay. He was in agony, feeling very much like a bird which sits gazing at a snake that has charmed it, and deprived it of the power of will.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby himself was present to receive his niece's guest, as was only proper he

should be; and, of course, he was too polished a man to show that he understood the situation. He tried hard to make Jack feel at home, and his conduct toward him was above criticism. But love was a thing so foreign to his own nature that he felt at a loss to know how to treat his guest at first, and finally decided that a facetious manner was the only thing practical in such a case.

Accordingly, he related to him a story at which Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself had condescended to smile. Then he told him tales which had been originated by his grandfather, and had the double distinction of being well seasoned and intensely respectable. At last, as Jack did not cheer up, he permitted himself to crack a few choice jokes, which ladies of the highest standing had enjoyed at afternoon teas. If these had related to ordinary people, of course there would be no point to them; but they had to do with the élite, every one of them, and Mr. Willoughby considered them rare specimens of wit. In short, he was giving Jack Allers a crocodile reception that would have done credit to Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones herself.

But poor Jack was on pins and needles, and could not force a laugh if he had wished to. The experience he was going through was almost too much for him.

Mr. Willoughby's glance was like a serpent's eye, and he felt it was reading him and piercing his soul.

Soon he was seized with a desire to do something desperate, and it was almost torture to resist

the impulse. If he could pick up some article of furniture and hurl it at Mr. Willoughby's head, or upset the table and dump its contents on the floor, it would be a comfort to him. But the mere harboring of such thoughts against so polished a gentleman was the height of rudeness.

What a relief it was to him when Jockey Van Hurdle suddenly put in an appearance! Perhaps it was more than accident that brought him here the same evening Jack was to call; but the latter did not stop to consider that. Mr. Willoughby would have to give part of his attention to him, and turn those ancient fables on a man who had played horses, and played them gamely.

Jockey was in the best of spirits, too, and looked as if he had been picking winners lately. It was well if he had, because there was an ordeal before him this evening which was sure to call for good nature, and patience as well. Neither was he the kind of man, this fine, beefy fellow, to be overawed by anybody, not even by Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby. He had faced crises in his time, and had seen his last dollar go on a nag that was only beaten by an eyelash, and surely he would not be vanquished by the mild tactics brought to bear on him now!

We all know there is no sense like horse sense, and Jockey had plenty of it, and with all his devotion to the turf he knew more about the gentler sex than he got credit for. A man that could pick out the fine points of horses almost at a glance must

have quick perceptions, and Jockey had not been in that room a minute before he understood how the land lay in Jack's case, and perhaps he felt sympathy for the poor beggar, seeing he was hard hit. Jockey knew from experience the girl was a bad one to manage, very apt to take the bit in her teeth, as he would put it, and pick her own gait. He had been dancing with her more or less this winter, and, with his horsey shrewdness, had found out lots of things about her. He was proof against her charms himself. Horses don't give way to sentiment.

He understood now why he had been pressed so hard to call this evening, and without betraying himself he decided to take Jack Allers's part. He conceived that the best way he could do this was to rule old Willoughby out of the race, and accordingly he turned his attention to him.

Jockey Van Hurdle, we repeat, had faced ordeals before, but he had reason to fall back on his stoicism now, for Mr. Willoughby was playing a very clever hand. He had intrenched himself behind a barrier of etiquette, from which vantage point he held the field at his mercy. If, too, he was secretly rejoicing at the opportunity of showing his niece what real elegance of manner is, he did not betray it. He had settled Jack Allers already, and now turned his refined browbeating on the other man.

Jockey saw what was on, but the thought of horses gave him courage. Madge had got out a chafing-dish in the adjoining apartment, and as it

only required a hint from her to start Jack Allers thitherward, Jockey was soon left to face the music alone.

Whether he appeared to advantage, or not, doesn't matter. Horses are not vain. He was not a brilliant conversationalist. Horses don't talk. He put up a bold front, however. Horses are nervy. If he expressed an opinion, it was sure to be one that he was willing to stake money on. Horses have sand. He permitted his host to carry on most of the conversation, while he assumed an air that he would be heard from on the home stretch. Horses have staying powers. If he allowed his adversary to rattle on in his elegant, easy fashion, under the impression that he was carrying everything before him, it was because horses can take odds. He was not much of a society pusher, but, somehow, Mr. Willoughby's manner put him on his mettle, and he was not going to be outclassed so easily. Horses are game. He had some idea of culture, too, although in his opinion the greatest honor that could happen to a man would be to have a horse named after him.

When Jack Allers re-entered the room, a few minutes later, bearing some plates of lobster à la Newburg that Madge had prepared, he was pleased to find that Jockey was holding his own. There was a light in his eyes which plainly proclaimed that he had the field well in hand, and was only waiting a favorable moment to apply whip and spur, although at present it was a neck-and-neck race. Jack

was satisfied that so long as Jockey stuck to horses he was safe enough.

Now there is a proper way of eating in drawing-rooms on state occasions, and Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had mastered the art. He had attended afternoon teas until he learned how to nibble at a cracker in the midst of a small mob of ladies, who were all talking at once, each bent on holding his attention. But Jockey liked lobster à la Newburg, and at sight of the delicacy before him his mouth fairly watered. Nevertheless, he decided now that his best policy was to cling to his knife and fork, and do as his host did. The result was that he succeeded in getting that lobster inside him, but in such small bits he did not even taste it. Both Jack and Madge returned to the room as this extraordinary feat was accomplished, and the former could not help smiling a little at the ludicrousness of the situation. There sat these two watching each other, Mr. Willoughby holding forth in his elegant, easy fashion, and Jockey simply clinging to his knife and fork, and thinking about horses.

Madge came to ask if they did not want more lobster, and Mr. Willoughby, with characteristic politeness, allowed his guest to decide that question. But Jockey would have choked if he had been forced to put another morsel of that delicacy into his stomach without even chewing it, so plates were surrendered at once.

It was near midnight before he succeeded in getting Jack away. Hang the fellow! He seemed to

have lost his wits, and would have stayed till the sun rose, if it had not been for Jockey. As it was, it took more than one hint to start him. Jockey had seen trouble in getting racers off, but this beat him completely. He was winded himself, and could not keep the pace much longer. He considered that he had placed Jack Allers under lasting obligations for the part he had played this evening. He would not be willing to undergo another such ordeal for any odds.

But did Jack appreciate it? He had his doubts about that. He was still depressed and melancholy, now that he was out on the street and away from temptation. Jockey could not help feeling thankful that horses do not fall in love.

As Jack was still in the dumps, he felt that he had him on his hands yet a while, and decided to drag him off to the club and make a night of it. Accordingly, these two were soon pushing their way around the corner to Broadway, in the face of a sharp wind and driving snow. It had been storming all the evening, and a blizzard was raging.

Little did they dream that in another corner of the world an event had taken place that night which was to be of the utmost consequence to them and to the whole nation. It so happened that they were among the first to hear this news that was to startle the country.

They were so blinded by the sleet they nearly ran into a newsboy as they turned a corner. The youngster made himself known in the most abrupt

manner, for no sooner did he get sight of them than he bawled out above the roar of the gale:

**"Extry! Extry! Just out! De Maine blowed up in Havana Harbor!"**

## CHAPTER IV

THOSE unfortunate beings who cannot appreciate a professionally-fashionable reputation, and are not afraid to pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, will not find this piece entertaining. We are appealing to the elect of Mammon, and, first of all, this comedy aims to conform to the technique of the drawing-room, and cares nothing for curtain-thrilling effects. When, too, the author comes forward to make his best bow, he does so with the feeling that he is acting as master of ceremonies.

How, otherwise, would he dare to comment on the hypocrisy of the over-rich, unless he were sure of his audience? Why would he quote Mrs. Snubbody-Jones so glibly, except that he wishes to create the impression that she approves of his criticisms? She is authority for the statement that there are society crocodiles on the banks of the Hudson as much to be dreaded as those monsters that wallow on the banks of the Nile.

Every philosophic mind must be impressed by any revelations in the ethics of sham. Consequently, the reader will be glad to greet Mrs. Humphrey Provost in a star part again. Let us bear in mind,

however, that crocodile art does not call for real feeling, but can sometimes act up to it so cleverly that its hollowness is not suspected.

Poor Mr. Willoughby! But the writer has made no secret of the fact that this woman had been using him for her own ends for a long time. He must have been prepared for the sensational pose he found her assuming one afternoon, when he dropped in on her and Madge. It came unexpectedly, perhaps, but he could hardly be astonished at anything Prudence might do.

At sight of him Madge gave a frightened cry:  
"Uncle!"

It was an appeal for protection, but he ignored it, and turned to his hostess.

"You have told her!" he said, sternly.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost did not answer. She had thrown herself on a sofa, buried her face in her hands, and was giving way to an agony of despair. But she looked up quickly as he spoke, and her glance touched him. He read in that face an acknowledgment of her shame, and the love that would atone for it. She who had been so arrogant, so defiant, once, was humbled now, and only craved pity. Yes, pity; but there was an eager light in her eyes, that hoped for something more from those she had wronged.

Mr. Willoughby felt the appeal, and his anger vanished before it. He could not doubt that the motive that had goaded her to speak was the noblest of which this worldly-minded woman was capable.

He walked to the door, locked it, and then closed the window-shutters.

"There is no need of this going any further," he said, and gave her an encouraging nod.

Next he took Madge's hand and led her toward the couch, where the wretched woman lay, crouching like a degraded creature.

"My child," he said gently, "this is your mother. I am the only living witness to her marriage, which, for private reasons, she did not see fit to reveal."

But Mrs. Humphrey Provost did not move.

"I want her to know all!" she said, hoarsely. "Don't let her despise me, but tell her all!"

Mr. Willoughby was dazed for a moment, but he recovered himself quickly.

"Madam," he answered, with something like reproach, "you forget yourself! Please remember you were a Willoughby once, and your daughter is a Willoughby now!"

His manner was all chivalry as he spoke; his figure was sublime. This woman had sinned, but she was a Willoughby still. In that fact lay forgiveness and hope. She had been wronged, lied to, deceived, but she had been made a Willoughby! What further reparation could anyone ask?

In spite of herself Mrs. Humphrey Provost smiled feebly.

"My brother was a Willoughby," Mr. Roosevelt hastened to add. "He desired me to befriend you. I call you to witness I tried to follow out his wishes."

Mrs. Humphrey Provost looked up at him again at this, and gratitude was plainly written on her face.

"Yes, I must absolve you on that head. You showed yourself a gentleman and a man of honor throughout the whole affair. If there were more men like you in the world it would be better than it is."

Mr. Willoughby bowed almost gratefully. He was thanking her for vindicating the family name.

"Madam, I only acted as a true Willoughby should," he said, and bowed again.

Mrs. Humphrey Provost smiled up at him, and there was something like admiration in the glance she gave him now.

"It was poverty drove me to the step," she said, in a low voice. "My mother was an invalid, and we were wretchedly poor. My father—but let him pass. I never saw him, and I fear he must have been a villain. He had deserted us."

Mr. Willoughby could have told her about her father, but he did not. He was the man from whom he had rescued the poor woman he had been beating, so many years back, and who died a raving maniac after confessing to him the story of his shameless life.

"I gave you my daughter because I wished her to be in good hands," the penitent woman went on. "I knew you would do your full duty by her, you who were so good and kind to everybody. I knew

she would be brought up in your house like one of your own family."

"She was treated as a Willoughby should be," Mr. Roosevelt interrupted.

"I meant to claim her some day, but as time went on I could not do so. I came to this city, where I made friends. Your generosity placed me above want, and nobody asked me of my past. I met a man, and married him—not out of love, I admit, but out of ambition. That marriage sealed the past for me, and cut me off from all connection with it. It brought me riches, but it has not brought me happiness, and I have been punished for my folly as I deserve to be. I would have kept the secret still, but I am a lonely woman, and so many are against me. I feared that this girl here was siding with my enemies, and I could not bear the thought. I tried to bind her to me by ties of gratitude and friendship, but that was not enough for me. I was desperate, and determined to take the chance of her despising me forever. I——"

Mr. Willoughby interrupted her again, and he was a study of the ideal gentleman as he did so. There was a conscious air of triumph in his manner, and the thrill of the footlights seemed to be upon him. Here was a chance to prove to this woman, who had been sceptical of the family honor, what a real Willoughby was.

"Madam," he said, "when you gave your child into my keeping I promised you she should be brought up as a Willoughby should be, and I take

pleasure in proving to you I have kept my word. At your own request I kept the secret of her birth from her until you revealed it of your own free will and accord. If now she were to turn against you from any such motive as you fancy, she would give the lie to her training, and I, myself, would be the first to repudiate her."

He advanced across the room to where Madge was sitting. She had dropped into a chair and remained a silent spectator of this conversation, seeming suddenly to have been deprived of the power of action. But, as her uncle approached and took her hand, she arose mechanically, and suffered him to lead her to the other woman, who watched her with fearful eyes.

"My child, this is your mother, your father's wife, my brother's widow. For reasons of her own, which I am sure you will appreciate, she has not seen fit to reveal her relationship to you until this moment. Try to prove to her that the family to which you belong knows how to treat its own members with the same charity they would ask for themselves."

He placed Madge's hand in that of Mrs. Humphrey Provost as he spoke, and for a moment the two women looked at each other, and then embraced impulsively. At the word "Mother!" which Madge uttered almost with a wail, he turned away, and blew his nose vigorously. He did not fully recover himself until Madge called to him:

"Uncle!"

As he faced her at the word, and beheld her countenance, proud and radiant, he owned that she had never looked so beautiful before.

"Uncle," she said, and her voice was rich and thrilling, "I have to thank you for what you have done for mother and me. It is on your account that we can look each other in the face now and forget and forgive our wrongs. We will try hereafter to repay you for all the trouble you have been put to on our account."

Mr. Willoughby gave a little gasp, and in the delight of the moment he forgot all about the agitation he had been under. He seized the hand his niece held out to him and raised it to his lips, while his heart swelled with pride and elation.

**She was a Willoughby after his own ideal!**

## BOOK VII

### CHAPTER I

#### JOHNNY TRUMPS

GENTLE spring had come at last. Soft zephyrs were sporting among the tops of the sky-scrapers in town, bringing to city folk the old Eden yearning for the seaside and the summer resort. A man's fancy now turns to thoughts of green fields and babbling brooks, and his only ambition is to go somewhere and shake off winter's lethargy in sweet communion with Mother Nature.

But, alas, in this merry springtime we are forced to treat of sterner things. The whole land was echoing to the din of warlike preparation, so that the season's greeting went unheeded. A wail had gone up from poor Cuba that found response in every loyal heart. The battle-cry of freedom was being sung once again in city, town, and countryside, and Johnny Trumps, the American soldier, was girding on his armor for another conflict.

The situation is so startling that we may well pause a moment to consider it.

Thank God! this war was not of America's seeking, but was forced on a reluctant people by an insolent foe. Perhaps, however, it is only charity to assume that Spain had lost her head, and did not know what she was doing. Could it be that the memory of her transgressions had risen up before her and driven her to madness? The blowing up of the Maine is sufficient in itself to merit the statement that she had gone daft over her troubles, and was not responsible for her own fanaticism.

How gladly Americans would have shirked this war, even up to the last moment, every American knows. When, however, it became apparent that they could not, the people accepted the issue almost in sorrow, and regarded it as an act of sacrifice on their part, made in behalf of humanity. They planned, also, to have it over with as soon as possible.

They consoled themselves with the reflection that it would be a war to set men free, and in this respect it was such a one as they had waged ever since they became a nation. The American people have a conscience to satisfy in a case of this kind, and they could not go into any contest with that conscience arrayed against them.

Neither could they engage in a scheme of conquest. They have known heaven's favor when the odds were heavy, and they are too noble a people to ignore it now. If they must fight, they can only fight in faith, like Israel of old, and in the thunder of the battle-peal and the clashing of armies their

eyes must see the glory of the coming of the Lord.

If ever a nation deserved to prosper on account of its moderation and love of justice, that nation is the United States of America. It has always been its boast that no other emblem on earth can rival the Star-spangled Banner as the champion of the oppressed, unless it be the Cross that was raised on Calvary.

Therefore, it is only due them to say that the American people had been dragged into this war because they had listened once again to the cry of those in bondage, and the motive that inspired them was the same that led their fathers to proclaim liberty to all mankind. Let none presume to sneer because the affair turned out so profitably; that was an unlooked-for coincidence. Posterity will judge the issue in all fairness. *Saint Jago for Spain! Humanity for America!*

So it has come to pass that, much to his own regret, the writer now finds himself seeking to stir up military zeal and arouse patriotism, although such topics do not appeal to those who deal with the gentle ways of society. But the reader need not be alarmed, we shall only treat of this war in so far as it affects certain characters that have figured in these pages. Even now we drop the subject to turn to pleasanter things. We are listening to the tinkling of wedding bells, and may give ourselves up to love's young dream, for Lillian of the Haughty Face is to be married to Hamilton Blood-

good. Let us try to forget war clouds, for a time, at least, and put on a smiling front.

The mere sight of Hamilton's mother on this occasion was enough to touch the coldest heart. It would be a natural mistake to assume that she was the one about to be married, instead of Lillian, and, indeed, we were on the very point of saying so. She was by far the happiest person in the wedding party.

Dick Twaddleby, the wag, was best man; but the marriage was no jest on this account. He did his duty, as prescribed by custom, posing before a select congregation in a way that made the groom look to his laurels. It goes almost without saying that Richard was hot stuff, and it is also worthy of note that bulldogs were not present at the ceremony..

But the exiles of the Mercury Club—dear friends and boon companions of the bridegroom, who had been having wine suppers on the strength of the engagement for weeks back—how they managed to restrain their feelings is something of a marvel. However, they conducted themselves with a decorum befitting the occasion, until the wedding feast was served, and then the way the corks began to pop caused Mrs. Thurston to renew the fears which had led her to give but a passive consent to her daughter's union.

The exiles were trying to make themselves popular now, because many of them believed it was to be their last appearance in society, and they wished

to leave a good impression behind them. The day after the ceremony they were to enter the army. The gossips were unanimously of the opinion that without their presence the wedding could not have been the success it was, and in the light of events that followed many people recalled their conduct with pleasure.

They were out for a good time, and they had it. All fear of bad form was thrown to the winds, and they were nice to everybody. Mrs. Stuyvesant Bloodgood, happy and beaming, came among them, and was received with enthusiasm, and toasted in many rousing bumpers. The way she encouraged them to drink to the health of the young couple made Mrs. Thurston fairly shudder.

Lillian of the Haughty Face made a handsome bride, and she never bore herself with more dignity than on this trying occasion. The gossips declared she was without an equal, and in a case of this kind the gossips always know what they are talking about. They also noted that Hamilton Bloodgood seemed very proud of her, from which they inferred he was deeply in love. Perhaps, now, they were right again.

The mere fact that Madge was Lillian's bridesmaid created some comment. Many people believed it was she Hamilton had been in love with all along, but it is evident they were mistaken. The truth of the matter is, this match had been of Madge's own making from the first. She had planned it herself, before either of the couple be-

gan to be lovers, and she carried it through as only a woman knows how to do.

But if Lillian was conscious of all these things, and if she was aware of the criticisms that certain busybodies had made, her manner was her only answer to them now. She could not be indifferent to the fact that her mother had opposed her marriage, and she must have been aware of many of the stories which had been circulated against the reputation of her husband. However, she was Lillian of the Haughty Face, and that was sufficient.

So it goes the whole world over. Love is blind, or else it is wilful. But who can tell the reason? Faithful, loyal, inconsistent—why is it that a woman censures one fault in a thousand men and forgives one man a thousand sins?

Jack Allers was at the wedding, quite like his old self. He, too, had planned to go into the army, and a change seemed to have come over him in consequence. He talked very freely with Madge about it. He told her that in every war the United States Government had waged, an Allers had taken part, and he wished to be in this one.

Fain would our muse dwell on sentiment and chivalry at this point, but the Cupid of the Money Bags demands attention now. He is a clever little rascal, and cannot be ignored by those who have accepted the code of Mammon. He does not bother himself about love's young dream, and he cares not a rap for heroics. Pocketbooks and bank rolls are his attractions, and the darts he uses have golden

tips to them. He is the slyest, cunningest, most irresistible imp, and many very respectable people declare that he is just too cute for anything.

About this time Mrs. Humphrey Provost decided that Madge would yield to her wishes and accept the husband she had chosen for her. Her motives were commendable, Prudence told herself. If she could get the girl married to Bridges, and out of the country, she might be able to acknowledge her openly as her daughter. She dared not reveal the secret in New York. Americans are so puritanical, and she had so many enemies. But get her to Paris, and all would be well.

Accordingly, she came to terms with Bridges about the matter of the *dot*. But here she blundered. She thought it was safe to reveal her past to the Parisian, and accordingly acknowledged that Madge was her own daughter, born out of wedlock. She had married her father afterward, though, just to satisfy American scruples. The girl had been brought up in ignorance of her birth, and the relationship had just been revealed to her. Now was the time for Bridges to speak.

Prudence further admitted that she had an object in view in bringing about this marriage. If she could see Madge living in Paris as his wife, she could openly recognize her as her daughter. She had feared that the girl was falling in love with that dismal Mr. Allers, and it had caused her some uneasiness. Get her to Paris at once, and all would be well.

Bridges' first step on hearing this surprising bit of family history was to raise the amount of the *dot*. The girl being illegitimate, on her mother's confession, and a marriage with a man of his liberal disposition being desirable, he felt justified in demanding a better settlement than he had stood out for. Matrimony was a serious thing to a man who had not yet made up his mind whether he was eager to settle down to a domestic existence. Therefore, he felt justified in asking for more *dot* than formerly.

Prudence was so vexed at the man's avarice she could not conceal her feelings. Nevertheless, she decided to continue the negotiations for this match, on which she had set her heart. She really loved Madge as a mother, and was pining for the time when she could recognize her before the world. She had formed a plan for doing this that would keep her secret, and Bridges was necessary to its success.

Accordingly, these two fell to bargaining over this matter of the *dot*, as if Madge were a piece of valuable merchandise, and had no right to choose her own fate. Bridges would not yield a point. He considered that he had been liberal enough already. When Prudence pointed out to him that he had no title to offer in this case, he retorted by reminding her that he would be the means of restoring her daughter to her.

It is painful to have to record that this romance, which was conducted according to the code of Mam-

mon, miscarried after all. The fault was Bridges's. Perhaps his patience had been exhausted by the ceaseless wrangle about the matter of the *dot*. Perhaps, too, he did not wish to marry, anyhow. Matrimony, even with a good *dot*, is a serious thing, when a man has not made up his mind whether he has sowed his wild oats yet.

But it must be confessed that the spirit of the libertine was too strong in Bridges to be shaken off easily. He told himself, with a sigh, that the day of amours would have to end after marriage. No more of those delightful little intrigues which, as a man of pleasure, had been the breath of life to him. American women get their ideas of romance from the Stone Age, and expect constancy in a husband. If it were possible for him to fall in love with the girl, after the American fashion, he had opportunity to prove it now, for Prudence, despairing of his obstinacy in regard to the *dot*, decided to try the effect of Madge's charms on him. She planned to bring them together as often as possible, and frequently had Bridges to dinner, so he could spend the evening with Madge. The Parisian found this something of a bore, but he managed to stand it. Prudence discovered, however, that he would not yield in the matter of the *dot*, in spite of her arts.

One evening he threw off the mask of conventionality, which had held him in check heretofore, and gave loose rein to his natural propensities. He had been drinking freely, and his veins were on fire.

The girl was tempting enough, and he was all alone with her in Mrs. Humphrey Provost's parlor.

All at once he became very free in his actions, and the spirit of recklessness took possession of him. He even took hold of Madge half playfully, and tried to drag her to his side.

She was cold, repellent, in an instant. •

He persisted, laughingly.

Then followed a scene that roused the woman in her and changed her into an Amazon.

Bridges seized her and began an avowal of passion that she could not misunderstand. This was the real meaning of his attentions, then? He thought because her mother—

Bridges was speaking now in a way that fairly froze the blood in her veins.

For a time she felt powerless to speak, her contempt for him rendering her speechless.

But at length, as he sought to embrace her, she tore herself from his grasp and struck him in the face. She hardly realized what she was doing, but struck with all her strength, not once, but thrice, and again. The blows she delivered in her fury were no light ones, either.

Bridges wore a black eye for a long time afterward, and that sleek, smiling face of his was bruised and swollen.

## CHAPTER II

THE motive which led the exiles of the Mercury Club to volunteer for the war was creditable to their patriotism and their manhood. Nevertheless, it is not unjust to them to state that they were only too glad to escape from the dull routine of club life, in which they were fast stagnating. Here was a chance to get a little excitement in a new and untried field. They had had everything else, and perhaps a campaign in a hostile country would save them from ennui.

Moreover, it was hinted among them that Spain had been guilty of bad form. Charley Poindexter said as much, and he ought to know. They did not state this openly, because they did not wish to ruin the chances of the proud Castilian at the very outset of the struggle by proclaiming it broadcast. Their sense of fairness forbade this. For, serious as were some of the things that the newspapers were charging against Spain, they were as nothing to bad form in the exiles' eyes. In their judgment this was a handicap that no nation could be expected to stand up under. However, they took comfort for their own cause, now that bad form was charged to the other side.

Charley Poindexter did not hesitate to say that he was acting for the best interest of the club in asking everybody to enlist. It was his desire that the members should volunteer as a unit, and get into the same command. This they succeeded in doing. The regiment they joined made itself famous ere the war closed, and they did their share towards winning its reputation.

Poindexter had had a military education, and succeeded in getting a commission; and Stacey Mansfield, who had forgotten something about drill, was made sergeant. The rest had to be content to go as mere privates, and they were glad of the chance, at that.

Jockey Van Hurdle was among the first to offer himself, and a more enthusiastic recruit it would have been hard to find. His manner underwent such a change all at once that his friends scarcely knew him for the same man that used to sit in the clubhouse, smoking a cigar, and thinking about horses by the hour. He threw off his former stolidity, and went about exhorting his fellows to join, declaring that they must make the company the crackest thing in the regiment, and the regiment the crackest thing in the whole army. Brave old Jockey! It was indeed a hero's part that fate had in store for him, and the end of it all was glory.

Young Quizzledown was not afraid to admit that Methuselah was partly responsible for his enthusiasm. The old patriarch had conceived a violent prejudice against the war, and against all who

favored it. He declared that the President had gone crazy, and Congress was a pack of fools, and even predicted the speedy downfall of the Republic. When Quizzledown drew him into an argument on the subject he actually refused to repudiate his own statements, but insisted that the country was going to the perdition bow-wows.

None the less ardent to prove his heroism was Jack Allers, and the motive that induced him to seek the service was altogether honorable. His health had been breaking down for some time past, so that it was all he could do to pass the physical examination. The surgeon refused him at the first trial, but was persuaded to give him a second chance, and he managed to get in.

Thus it came about that in the pleasant spring-time the exiles did not go to Heathdale, as had been their custom for a number of years. The club-house was given over to the old fogies, who could quarrel over chairs and small points of precedence, and listen to Methuselah railing against the government, to their heart's content. Ere summer had set in, all of the younger members were in camp, mustered into the gallant N-th Regiment, panting for active service in Cuba against the enemy. They were kept busy for some weeks going through the drills, digging ditches, and manipulating the pick-axe and shovel under the supervision of Sergeant Mansfield and some others. The work was new to them, and, in spite of its novelty, irksome. Neither did their troubles end here. It was no easy matter

to get rid of an appetite that had been educated to club fare, and bring the digestive organs down to hard-tack and canned rations. Before they succeeded they had lost many pounds of flesh, and not a few of them had been in the hospital; but with their enthusiasm to see service, they endured this without murmuring.

Dick Twaddleby considered that he showed his patriotism in accepting a mere private's position. With his physique, he used to wonder why they didn't offer him a commission. He gave the commanding officer the full benefit of his chest as he went out to dress parade or guard mount, and he rather pitied his obtruseness in not recommending him for promotion at sight. Richard's genial temper soon made him popular all through the regiment. His fellow privates made much of him, and even dignified officers caught themselves in the act of smiling at some of his bright sallies. He took the rough part of the life as a huge joke, and kept cheerful under trying circumstances. He used to declare that we had so many football contests in the United States, war was mere child's play to us. He was obedient to his superiors in rank, and was altogether a model in deportment. The captain admitted afterward that he was the best man in the company.

Charley Poindexter made a good officer. Always a gentleman himself, he treated his subordinates in a way that made them respect him, and he never lost sight of the fact that they were only human,

and needed encouragement. It was admitted at headquarters that he could do more with his men than almost any other officer. He was placed in charge of a field gun, an honor eagerly sought for, and there is no telling to what distinctions he might attain ere the war closed.

He made it a point to be very strict with the exiles in his command, and took care that they should appreciate bad form in the military sense. Nevertheless, he unbent quite in the spirit of old times and good fellowship to one of their number, and the circumstance is worth recording.

It chanced that Private Twaddleby was on sentry duty one rainy night, and Lieutenant Poindexter was officer of the guard. The state of the weather was enough to make even a man of Richard's genial temperament feel depressed, as he was on a lonely post, and the mud was ankle deep. However, when the lieutenant came around at midnight he did not betray the state of his feelings in the way he came to present arms. Lieutenant Poindexter, as he returned this salute, permitted himself to throw military etiquette to the winds for a moment. There was nobody about to criticise, and why should he not be gracious to his former chum, who needed a word of cheer now, if ever a soldier did?

"You'll live to marry an heiress yet, Richard," he said, with something like his old-time playfulness.

But Private Twaddleby, hearing himself ad-

dressed by his superior, only brought his piece to port arms.

This incident, of course, was not reported at headquarters.

But at last there came a day when the regiment got orders to move, and straightway every soldier forgot his discontent. Camp was broken, baggage packed, and the command hurried southward to meet transports for Cuba, and active service.

## CHAPTER III

IT is not the author's purpose to strike the measure of football heroics, and fall to narrating the stirring events which led up to the surrender at Santiago. Neither does he propose to question the conduct of the campaign, after the example of so many critics, who seem to assume that their own judgment is infallible.

Not but what there is plenty to praise in the conduct of American soldiers and sailors, who proved to the world that under democracy patriotism does not die out, nor society degenerate. But Johnny Trumps needs no eulogy. His deeds are a eulogy in themselves.

Yea, verily; and the old Berserker spirit is not dead yet; neither have the fighting qualities of the Anglo-Saxons deteriorated with the lapse of centuries. On the contrary, this race seems to have grown stronger in character as it advanced in civilization. In intelligence, refinement, and ability, it is famous the world over, and if forced to go back to the savage instinct, and wage war, it can fight as fearlessly as it could in the days of its barbarism.

It was the enthusiasm of the rank and file that excused the apparent rashness of the American com-

manders. The occasion demanded not ordinary deeds, but miracles, and with any other class of soldiers the campaign might have been an utter failure.

Everybody went wild when Cuba was reached at last, and prospects of actual fighting were imminent. A general who would have tried to hold the men back now would have been jeered at by the privates themselves. The bands played light operatic airs while the regiments landed, formed, and marched away. It was an up-to-date army, and it was going to be an up-to-date war.

Who is not ready to champion the cause of the wretched creatures one meets with at every turn in this unhappy country, which, under tyranny, had become a curse to its inhabitants? Away with the fault-finder! Away with those who would compromise with oppression! Here now our Flag is hailed as the emblem of freedom, and the favor of heaven must be upon it.

The soldiers had ceased their grumbling, and were in the best of spirits. The enthusiasm which had been held in check so long began to manifest itself as the certainty of battle was brought home to them. They were like dogs straining in the leashes, with the game in full view.

A few volleys in front announced that the advance guard was already engaged, and a thrill seemed to go through the ranks at the very sound. It was all the officers could do to keep the troops from breaking into a run for the firing line.

Now there is another volley, then another, and somebody rides up with an order to advance for attack. There is a repressed cheer, and another thrill goes through the ranks.

“Forward, my bullies!”

And Johnny Trumps broke for the Spanish line.

Through a tangle of tropical underbrush, through canebrake, morass, and dense foliage, which obstructed the view in front, on they rushed, and took the first baptism of fire. When they broke into a trench at the bayonet point they were surprised to discover Spaniards shot through the head and forearm, the only parts exposed above the earthworks. They had fired at random, with nothing but the reports of the enemies’ guns to guide them. But there was little time to note such things. There were other trenches ahead, and they pushed on until these were taken, and when night fell the foe had retired beyond hope of pursuit.

We are led into this description because we are following the fortunes of the exiles, who, as members of the gallant N-th Regiment, were in the thickest of the fight. Our friends conducted themselves on this occasion in a way that won them the respect of veterans. They entered two trenches and captured a block-house. This last was effected under the command of Lieutenant Poindexter himself. They came upon it suddenly, and should have waited for reinforcements, considering the fact that they were only part of a company, and a crowd of Spaniards were intrenched about it. A mule-path

led up to it, and the ascent was steep; but Poindexter sprang to the front and shouted the men on.

To their surprise, the enemy fired a volley that passed harmlessly over their heads, then turned and fled.

Dick Twaddleby was so struck with the ludicrousness of the thing, that he was moved to joke about it.

“Dear boy,” he said to a comrade, “they knew we had a mortgage on that block-house and thought we had come to foreclose.”

“Right you are, Richard!” Sergeant Mansfield answered, as he drew a bead on the retreating Spaniards with his Krag.

Richard: “This war is a cinch, anyhow. All we have to do is to charge into a trench, give the enemy a kick all around, and then charge into another, and kick them again. That’s the way to take Cuba.”

Sergeant Mansfield: “Right you are, Richard.”

Richard: “The mistake Spain made was that she took the sleeping alligator for a log, and now she is going to get gobbled. However, as she is not in our class, we may let her down easy, provided she takes her punishment meekly. She will lose more now than she would have lost if she had taken the tip when it was passed to her about Cuba. Now your Uncle Sam has got a first mortgage on everything Spain owns, and, what is more, he is going to foreclose.”

Sergeant Mansfield: “Right you are, Richard.” But the exiles were not surprised at the poor

showing Spain was making. What can you expect of a nation that has been guilty of bad form? The wonder was that the Castilians did anything at all.

It seemed to them the war was going to be a mere holiday, with just enough danger in it to give it raciness. But, alas! there was misery enough to many, and they were to get their share of that, also.

They were marching back to camp in the best of spirits with the result of the day's work, when a messenger met them with the sad news that Jockey Van Hurdle had been killed with the advance guard.

Poor, brave Jockey! He had been sent out to beat up the enemy, and had walked straight into an ambush which had been laid for the army itself. The sergeant who commanded the party waved a warning to him, and his comrades shouted to him to save himself ere they turned to run, but it was too late. Jockey's fighting blood was up, and he was thinking about glory.

Not horses now! The spirit of heroism had taken possession of his soul, and to fly were worse than cowardice. He faced his foes until he fell in the very act of loading his last cartridge.

Brave old Jockey! He died without flinching, as game in death as he had been in life. Who could wish him a nobler fate? Who will not rather envy him his grave of honor? The first to fall fighting for the weak and oppressed—such be his epitaph.

A newspaper man who ran across his body was so impressed with the sight he stopped to describe

it. There he lay dead, blocking the only pathway that led to the enemies' lines, a scowl of battle lingering on his brow, and such a look on his face as seemed to claim the right to dispute that passage he by self-sacrifice had won. They buried him in the soil he had died to redeem, and brave men wept like children as they laid him to rest in it.

But, alas ! he was not the only one who gave his young life to his country's cause that day. All around, where the army had fought, the dead and wounded lay ; and, as the sun was sinking, the band played the national anthem, as a requiem to heroic souls, and dying men raised their voices to join feebly in the chorus, and dying eyes were fastened on Old Glory until the light in them went out forever.

But it is not our purpose to dwell on these things, and except they concerned certain persons connected with this story we would not describe them at all.

## CHAPTER IV

WHEN that April with its showers sweet the drouth of March hath pierced to the root, and during the season known as the heated term, certain persons prominent in society go on pilgrimages to Newport, where Mammon hath set up a most famous shrine.

Just to gain admittance to this is considered a very great privilege by the elect of fashion, and the chance pilgrim that might try to force his way in there would be treated as an arrogant interloper. A man may rank high in the social world at large, and yet stand no more chance of getting the entrée at Newport than he has of beholding the tomb of the Prophet. It has been whispered that it is more difficult to pass muster in this place than it is to get presented at some courts in Europe. Newport is popularly regarded as the *sanctum sanctorum* of American society, and the paradise of the over-rich.

When a man is sure of the favor of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, as the author now is, and can rely on her to back his statements, he may be excused if he is led into making rash ones. But with such a theme as Newport furnishes, how can one go too

far? It is the fairy land, and the genii of Mammon are here to work all the sorcery known to the necromancy of frenzied finance. Here you may see Aladdin and his wonderful lamp outdone. Here you may find the place where the rich princess in the fairy tale dwelt, and with your own eyes you may behold the wonders our childish fancy dreamed about. Here the professionally-fashionable congregate, and stand off the common herd; and all the titled nobility of Mammon, the over-rich and the great billionaire, set up their regal state. When people have so much money they don't know what to do with it, they come here, so that they may not feel out of their class.

Furthermore, once upon a time Mrs. Snubboddy-Jones permitted herself to say that everything leads to Newport.

It was probably for these reasons that Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had long cast covetous eyes on this favored spot. He had promised himself that it would be his aim to win recognition there, and he also planned to make Mrs. Snubboddy-Jones go sponsor for him when he should do so. He was not afraid to trust himself to the crocodiles, now that he had become one of them himself. He was looking forward with great complacency for society to get on the move, when this horrid war came along and spoiled everything.

Alas! such is the destiny of man, who never is, but is always to be, blessed!

Mr. Willoughby had played his cards so cleverly,

and to think that a thing like this should break up the game! Kismet! It is fate!

But, for that matter, he was not the only sufferer from this same cause. Long before the outbreak of hostilities, alarming rumors were set afloat that created no little uneasiness among the people to whom a season at Newport had become a habit not easily to be resigned. We speak pathetically of those whom the conflict directly affected, but here is a new phase of it, not commonly taken into account. Just fancy Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller's dilemma when she was forced to give up her Newport pilgrimage for fear of the Spanish fleet! Fancy Mrs. Wholepush's state of mind when she learned that her villa might be laid in ruins! Imagine Mrs. Isgood's chagrin when she had to forego her trip to Europe, for fear the seas would be harrowed by pirates! Consider all these things, add Mr. Willoughby's disappointment to the sum total, and then admit that it is all very well for impecunious patriots to rush blindly into warfare, but this kind of thing falls heavily on those that have something at stake. Some declared that Newport should be exempt from pillage in the articles of war, and even Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones permitted herself to be worried over the situation.

Now a Willoughby once distinguished himself in the Continental Army during the Revolution, and Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, who regarded himself as the reincarnation of all his ancestors, and who felt that his family tradition required him to be

loyal to the government, whatever it did, was forced to hear talk that unsettled him. One man, who professed to know something of military affairs, and was own cousin to Mrs. Saltearth, in the bargain, spoke of the government's stupidity in sending what little fleet it had into the enemy's waters. What was to prevent its own coast from being sacked? What was to hinder the Spanish ships from sailing right over Sandy Hook bar and taking New York?

Another critic to whom Mr. Willoughby talked went even further. He had lived abroad until he had come to have a poor opinion of everything American, and he could not for a moment believe that a nation situated on this side of the Atlantic could amount to anything against Europe. He predicted that the United States would soon be divided among the great and little powers, and he comforted himself with the thought that England would undoubtedly get New York. One or two old women were frightened by such brag, and the wonder was that the stars did not drop right out of Old Glory on account of it.

Neither is there any telling what the effect of this might have been on Mr. Willoughby. He could not overlook the fact that these parties belonged to the professionally-fashionable set. It is all very well to talk about the support of the masses, but if the cream of society should become disaffected in a crisis of this kind—— Bless my soul! where would we be likely to end?

But, happily, all such danger was averted. In the hour of trial Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones arose, and announced her approval of the war. Perhaps there was a suspicion in her mind that outsiders and new people had brought on this startling condition of affairs, and the time had come for Americans to assert their dignity. Be that as it may, she permitted herself to back the government now.

In Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby's opinion the nation was saved.

## CHAPTER V

CROCODILE patriotism may not appeal to the average American citizen unless he has designs on the United States treasury. Candor compels us to say, however, that there is a great deal of it in this land of the sovereign politician, and sometimes it sits in high places, and uses the public credit for its own ends. Too many of our so-called statesmen have only a crocodile interest in the people they pretend to serve, and it might not be a bad idea if the voters were able to distinguish between crocodile patriotism and the real article.

So, at least, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby thought, and now that his mind had expanded to the beauties of the crocodile idea he was inclined to apply it to every field of human enterprise. In his estimation it was a great philosophy, capable of embracing everything in society. Let us see now whether there is not some ground for this belief.

History is full of achievements that may only be important from a crocodile standpoint. Even in this enlightened age our wise men sometimes get excited over events that should be taken in a crocodile sense, if they cannot be ignored entirely. A

question arises touching the boundaries of Sene-gambia, that nobody cares two straws about. Straightway the diplomats pull long faces, and predict direful things, and strategists fall to telling what would happen if the forces of one empire were dumped on the forces of another empire.

Now would it not be better for the world at large to take this thing with crocodile indifference?

Again, the report comes in flaming headlines that his supreme dizziness, the Sultan of Hominy Island, will dispense with a civilized bill of fare, and go back to a diet of roast missionary. Straightway we are informed that the peace of the world is threatened, whereas it is only threatened in a crocodile sense.

We have a crowd of alarmist statesmen among us who delight to frighten the timid with dire predictions of evil. We would do well to take them in a crocodile fashion, and spare ourselves anxiety on their account.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby honestly believed that some modern nations should put the crocodile in their flag.

When, too, it comes to politics, in this age of graft, Mr. Willoughby believed that the crocodile idea would elevate the entire system. Take the case of an election, where much spoil is at stake. Some statesman arises to advocate the rights of the downtrodden masses, and gets a share of that spoil himself. How he bellows forth predictions of the awful things that will happen unless he is elected,

and how he pleads with the people to have wrongs that he alone can right, or, if they haven't them, to pretend they have! He warns the voters that the eyes of the solar system are upon them, and he begs them to do their duty, their full duty, and nothing but their duty, and bury his opponent under an unprecedented majority.

Such a patriot may be taken in crocodile fashion.

Some of these modern reformers, too, who want to overthrow everything and make the world over again—they should be accepted as crocodile benefactors.

As to the modern newspaper, surely the crocodile idea would benefit it. Every once in a while it comes out with startling headlines that are not so, and endeavors to excite the public over events that may be denied in the next issue.

Something in the crocodile line is absolutely essential to democracy, because it is always airing its dirty linen in public. Those who believe in it appreciate this fact, and do not lose faith in it; but even its most ardent champions tire of the calamity howler. Let democracy, for its own protection, accept these in crocodile resignation. We cannot dodge the pessimist in modern society, it would seem. Perhaps we would do well to develop a crocodile indifference for his benefit and our own dignity.

The great trouble with civilization is, there are too many crocodile saviours trying to bring on a crocodile millenium.

Mr. Willoughby decided that New York is a crocodile town. It interests itself in the sensation of the hour, and then drops it abruptly.

Yes, there is much to be said in favor of a crocodile view of life, even though the average citizen might be disposed to receive it with caution. It is sad to reflect, too, how much has been lost to history and literature because the crocodile standard was not proclaimed sooner. Just think of the crocodile sympathy that might have been pumped up in behalf of Shylock, and what crocodile excuses he might have offered for grinding the faces of the poor. What crocodile love Richard III might have expressed for his relations, and what beautiful domestic sentiments Bluebeard could have uttered in a crocodile fashion.

But it is not too late for the world to receive it now, and perhaps, as Mr. Willoughby believed, it might prove to be the salvation of modern society. There was such license in it. He found that he could express opinions that he did not believe, provided the people he told them to could appreciate the fact that he was speaking in a crocodile sense, and was not to be taken seriously.

But when he chanced to meet a fellow crocodile —ah! that was the time to hear the lion roar! The two would proceed to unbosom themselves, safe in the thought that they understood each other, and any fine sentiment they might give way to was only skin deep. Your ideal crocodile is born, and not made, and from the hour that the system was pro-

claimed it was discovered that society had always been full of them.

There are heights of crocodile rapture to which only the initiated can hope to attain. Mr. Willoughby rose to them by a kind of intuition. It was only necessary for him to wrap himself in the personality of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, and he was the incarnation of crocodile idealism. At such moments he realized what was meant by the expression, "the naked soul." This was right in the crocodile line, because it taught the advantage of using empty words in such fashion that they might pass for heart-throbs.

Nothing pleases a crocodile more, when he is in the mood for it, than to meet some unsophisticated person who is willing to take his remarks seriously. The crocodile system has this great advantage, that it can be taken in jest, or accepted in earnest. The fun comes in, however, when you meet a party who accepts all sentiment as genuine, at least so Mr. Willoughby found. He was constantly being placed in situations where he had to pump up sympathy he could not possibly feel. Of course, anyone who knew him would understand what he was driving at, but some stranger, or some serious-minded person—really, it was amusing to watch the effect of mere crocodile courtesy in such a case.

One day Mr. Willoughby met a man who had a grievance against society, and was bound to air it. He could not get away from him, but had to hear him through. However, he simply gave a

crocodile assent to everything he said, and saved himself the bother of arguing with him.

Heavens! What things that man made him listen to!

He abused Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, sneered at Mrs. Saltearth, and insinuated that every member of the professionally-fashionable set was a libertine. Mr. Willoughby did not even attempt to refute a single one of his statements, but he simply smiled a crocodile smile, and let him go his way. Of course, he took care to shun that man afterward as he would a pestilence. Nevertheless, his treatment of him was a triumph of the crocodile idea. Mr. Willoughby felt now that he had become a crocodile of crocodiles.

When, too, he read an article in a newspaper to the effect that Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller's husband, who was head of a banking syndicate, ought to be in jail, he was more than ever convinced that the crocodile idea would be the salvation of society.

Again he was forced to listen to a man who declared that every millionaire was a criminal, and Wall Street was equivalent to the penitentiary. But he simply gave a crocodile smile, and his silence was golden.

That was the charm of the whole system. A crocodile is not afraid to listen to attacks on his dearest friends. He sits unmoved while the things he holds sacred are torn to shreds before his eyes. It is not enough to be able to pump up interest in the commonest things, because they are considered

good form. It is not enough to counterfeit feeling, and indulge in mock sentiment, without harm to one's self. A crocodile can ignore things that would otherwise shock him, by simply wrapping himself in crocodile apathy. It is grand! It is philosophical!

And, withal, how necessary at times! It is a relief to be able to do this on demand. To shed tears over some trifle, because that trifle happens to be of moment, is almost a triumph of art. It saves a man from boredom, and from appearing to be out of sympathy with his surroundings.

Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had become so skilled in the use of crocodile sham that he could deceive himself into the belief that his sentiment was real, when it was only make-believe. Trifles did not bother him any more, nor subterfuge annoy him. He simply turned crocodile at the drop of the hat, and shed his moral responsibilities as a duck's back sheds water. In a crocodile sense he could take an interest in the people that would pass out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, and this was proof that he had carried the crocodile theory to the very limits of the philosophical.

He was now able to take only a crocodile interest in the war, since Mrs. Snubbody-Jones's approval of it had robbed it of the one element of danger; and surely his way of doing so was preferable to the conduct of some newspapers. They were making themselves ridiculous criticising generals and

admirals, and telling the War Department itself just how a campaign should be conducted.

Evidently it would not be a bad idea if the great American people would sometimes take a crocodile view of their own enthusiasm.

But even Mr. Willoughby had to admit that the ideal crocodile was to be found among the gentler sex. It comes more natural to women than to men. Ah! how pleasant it was to sit in some cozy boudoir, and enjoy a crocodile tête-à-tête with a society belle! What outpourings of crocodile sentiment, what crocodile heart-throbs, what beautiful feminine rhapsodies, Mr. Willoughby listened to now! According to the crocodile canon, a woman need not be afraid to enthuse over the beauty of a rival. Two ladies with hate in their hearts could sit and purr to each other in a way that is charming to behold. Yes, and they could say such lovely things about each other to mutual friends, without danger of being thought spiteful. Envy, hatred, and malice, these gentle creatures could put from them, and translate them all into crocodile admiration.

The devil found out in Eden how women can be tempted, and he wisely decided to get at man through her. The moral of this is worth considering, in these days, when our race has forgotten its former innocence, and is too prone to listen to the voice of the tempter, if he assails us through our cupidity. The writer has not hesitated to admit that Mrs. Humphrey Provost was a very selfish woman, and would not stick at a trifle when her comfort

was concerned. She would take care, however, that she could not be unpleasantly criticised by so doing, and in this respect she was past mistress of the crocodile art.

She had won on every move, and had the field well in hand for her last sensational play for sympathy. It only remained now for her to show what a martyr she had been all these years, and her sister-in-law stupidly furnished her the opportunity to do the worm-turning act in the limelight of society.

One day Mr. Humphrey Provost showed up in New York unexpectedly, and Mrs. Saltearth insolently ordered Prudence to leave town at once, as she had agreed to do when her husband chose to remain in it.

Prudence must have laughed gleefully at this move on the part of her enemy. She would not have been human if she had not felt a bit elated over such a blunder. As a matter of fact, she rejoiced with exceeding great joy. The opportunity to strike the great blow had come at last, and she could not have asked for a better pretext to pose for sympathy than the one now afforded her.

Prudence threw off the mask at once, and announced to all her friends that she would seek a divorce. Nobody blamed her. They all felt that the limit had been reached.

Even Mr. Willoughby had to admit the justice of her action, although he had been neutral for some time now. Bless my soul! must this poor woman resign the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones

when she had been at such pains to win it? It was outrageous to request such a thing, and Mrs. Salt-earth should be more reasonable.

Everybody else took practically the same view of the case, although they may not have expressed their sentiment in the same fashion. If ever a woman had been a martyr to a family spite, Prudence was the one of all others. She had done so much to conciliate her husband, and had shut her eyes to so many things. Mrs. Saltearth should feel grateful to her for the way she had submitted to neglect and insult. Her meekness would touch the heart of her bitterest enemy. She had always conducted herself with decorum, and such insolent treatment was an insult to her.

All these things Prudence took care that people should feel, and say. She let it be known that her sister-in-law was jealous of her growing social power. The amount of crocodile sympathy she succeeded in stirring up in her behalf was astonishing.

Mrs. Saltearth had made the fatal mistake of underrating Prudence's power all along, and she had not learned anything from the experiences of the last few months. She bore herself in the most arrogant fashion, and we have seen how she offended Mr. Willoughby by threatening to defy Mrs. Snubbody-Jones. A few people tried to warn her, even now, but all in vain. She simply would not see the drift of things. She could not comprehend.

What pen shall picture her mortification when she discovered, all too late, that she had made an-

other blunder? She had to be told that Prudence had shown forbearance as few other women would have done. She had to witness the triumph of this adventuress's plans, believing all the time that she was acting to deceive people and get sympathy, and yet she was unable to unmask her. As a last bitter drop in the cup, she had to send for Mr. Willoughby himself, and ask him to use his influence to get the divorce evidence taken in secret. Alas! how had the mighty fallen, and who shall say that there is any punishment so terrible as having to swallow your own pride?

At first, Prudence declared that the trial must be a public one. She grew quite frantic to her friends when she made this announcement. She wanted to go before a jury and tell the story of her martyrdom in the newspapers. She wished the world to know what she had suffered, and what she had borne.

But Mr. Willoughby was able to use some mysterious influence to make her consent to a secret hearing. No defence was made. The judge handed in a decision in Prudence's favor, and she was granted a separation, with the right to marry again. Within a few days afterward she had become the bride of Sir Lionel Dudley, and had left America for good and all.

Mrs. Saltearth had the further mortification of seeing everybody attend this wedding, and society giving countenance to the rival she so hated. She could not speak now, because nobody would listen

to her. In fact, she had been beaten so badly she could not get up enough courage to do anything. When she had recovered her feelings sufficiently to act it was too late; the bird had flown.

The old saying, "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," was vindicated in the case of Mr. Willoughby during this unpleasant business. People noted with wonder the power he was able to bring to bear on the late Mrs. Humphrey Provost, and everybody gave him credit for the use he made of it. Society felt that it owed much to him, and his position was assured from this time forward.

He was the confidant of everybody, and he smoothed over all difficulties. Even Mrs. Saltearth was forced to express her gratitude to him afterward for the stand he took, and she showed it in a way he could best appreciate.

Fortunately, the newspapers were inclined to ignore this affair. The war was in full swing, and reporters had suddenly blossomed out as strategists with military ideas that would have dazzled the great Napoleon. Relying on their own infallibility, editors who never attended a guard-mount threw themselves into the conflict with unrestrained enthusiasm. In heavy headlines they rushed to the charge, and the carnage of printer's ink was frightful to behold. Consequently, a society scandal, which at any other time would have called for columns of criticism for everybody remotely connected with it, was dismissed in a few lines, in order that

the War Department might not lose a chance to get enlightenment from the papers.

But if publicity had been given to this affair, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby would have been discovered posing before the public for the tact he displayed. If his position was a trying one, he deserved the more credit for the way he conducted himself. He worked hard to hold Prudence in check, as everybody saw, and he placed Mrs. Saltearth under obligations to him. But he got his reward. Mrs. Snubbody-Jones permitted herself to praise him to people, and he had the extreme felicity of knowing that she approved of everything he did. One day, too, she very graciously remarked that he had made society his debtor.

But the fact was, he was moved to do great things. He seemed to be haunted by a vision of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones permitting herself to be worried over the situation because of outsiders and new people. Her sad eyes were always before him, and they called forth all the chivalry of his nature. There was a possibility, also, that Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, in turn, might permit herself to be touched by this proof of his devotion.

Toward the last the affair took on a somewhat ludicrous aspect, however. Mr. Willoughby's sister, Mrs. Wadham Adams, chose to interest herself in the case. Of course, the motive that impelled this pious woman to seek to cast down the mighty from their seats was of the most philanthropic sort. Nevertheless, she had found out the greatest num-

ber of things about the greatest number of people, and she took advantage of this opportunity to circulate them. Some of them had no bearing on the case at all, but they served her purpose.

Heretofore, Mr. Willoughby had taken his sister seriously, but he resolved now to treat her in a crocodile fashion. As it turned out, it worked admirably.

He made her think that he was in earnest all the time; that was the amusing part of it. He pretended to be very much alarmed about her statements, but it was crocodile alarm, because he took care to render them harmless. He followed her about like her own shadow, and sprung her traps as soon as she had set them. If she called on anybody for the purpose of spreading scandals, he presented himself at the same house, learned what she had said, and corrected it before her puzzled hearers had grasped the situation. In this way he saved them from making an indiscreet remark, and the crocodile effect was impressive.

## CHAPTER VI

MODERN society should be taken in a crocodile sense, and then, perhaps, there would be fewer heart-breaks caused by its disappointments. It will always have its hypocritical side, and some of its most important occurrences are only significant from a crocodile standpoint.

Contrariwise, the events which we are narrating, although seemingly trivial, had a far-reaching effect. Society was revolutionizing about this time, and the old standard was going out of fashion. The over-rich were beginning to flock by themselves, and there was an influx of people very wealthy and well placed from other cities. The social formula was becoming more complex, and conservative leaders were put to their wits' end to hold their places.

It must be confessed that Mr. Willoughby was taking a somewhat narrow view when he assumed that every road to greatness led up to the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones. Candor compels the admission that there were other women in society worthy of being classed with her. Mrs. Uppercrust-Miller, for instance, enjoyed an enviable reputation for her success in dress, and had a large following in con-

sequence. At horse shows and operas, where ladies vie with one another to create a new fashion in gowns, she had many triumphs to her credit.

Then, too, Mrs. Saltearth's partisans were not to be despised, as Prudence very well knew. Except she got away from New York when she did, she would surely have been made to feel their power.

Perhaps it would be proper to say that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones's position might be likened to that of a general overseer of the many sets into which society might break up at any moment. It had often been remarked that she managed to be neutral whenever a clash came, or a crisis seemed imminent. Then she would very graciously permit herself to assert her authority, in such a way as added to her prestige.

Furthermore, if anybody else were to attempt to form a syndicate out of society she would have no trouble in foiling them.

It is worthy of note that in this present quarrel she did not commit herself by word or action to any clique, but ignored them all. Even Mrs. Saltearth was forced to admit this afterward, and she had to concede, also, that her standing as a society leader was greater than it had ever been.

But it is more to our purpose to note the fact that Prudence left one man behind her in America who felt as if he had been freed from bondage. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby was perfectly satisfied in his own mind that if she had stayed in the country an-

other week she would have succeeded in passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones, and thus brought her career to an inglorious issue. In fact, he believed that she only got away in time to escape a calamity so direful. It was such a relief to get her off his hands!

Doubtless all his friends thought Mr. Willoughby a cold man, and unapproachable from the stand-point of sentiment. But, ah! if the world only knew! He had loved a woman once, whom his own brother had wronged. He had loved her in her infamy, and in his grief at his brother's shame. But he had freed himself from the tyranny of that love by the loyal service he had been able to do for her. Perhaps, if he had not been able to perform it he could not have borne his cross so meekly.

He accepted it partly in atonement for his brother's sin, and partly because of a puritanical conscience that bade him do his full duty by her whenever she chose to demand it. He had been the soul of honor in all his dealings with her, and had stood foster-parent to her child. He had seen this daughter turn from her in shame when she realized the truth about her parentage. He had then forced her to accept the mother whom she might have learned to despise.

What is more, he had been this woman's sole friend and champion when her enemies raged against her. How often had Prudence shielded herself from scandal about her past by stating that

Mr. Willoughby had known her first husband, and could vouch for her!

And lastly, he had refused to yield to temptation, when she was poor and helpless, and wholly in his power. He was young then, and passion was strong within him. He could have loved her madly to his own undoing, but he conquered the impulses of an ignoble love. He was a Puritan and an anchorite combined.

This woman had clung to him all these years, and had used him brutally to advance her own interests, but he never murmured under her tyranny. How often had he been tempted to turn on her in the name of his sex, just to show her what manhood and real chivalry are. His very meekness was proof of what his love might have been, if his brother had not sinned. He told himself he could have worshipped her if he had not found her out, and if his regard for her had not been flung in his face with all the force of a cruel blow. He had seen her use others as selfishly as she used him, and it had comforted him to think he could be of service to her without asking anything in return. His refined nature was puritanical, and she had often shocked it. What do some women think men are? Sometimes it enraged Mr. Willoughby to perceive how blind this one was to his true feeling. He had checked himself more than once on the point of making a confession that would have humbled her in her own eyes, for the thoughtless way in

which she used him; but he never spoke, or hinted, a word to cause her uneasiness on his account.

Now it was all over. She was happily married, and her secret was safe in his keeping. He knew she could make a good wife. She had been shielded from the pitfalls that led to her first downfall, and the experiences she had faced had prepared her to accept her position, and not rebel against her husband from this time forward. But he—ah! the book of youth was closed to him forever, and with it youth's fondest dreams and longings. He had settled down into a society sycophant, and who will blame him if he forgot every other feeling in his mad devotion to a social ambition?

But enough of these harrowing thoughts! Away with pensive melancholy! In what should a man glory, save in the favor of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones?

With the clearness of a seer, Mr. Willoughby read the signs of the times. Schisms would rage among the elect. False leaders would arise, to bring on confusion by their foolish counsel. Then would come the awakening. Everybody would tire of wrangling, and clamor for peace. Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones would assert her power, and she might be able to carry out her ideas about a fashionable syndicate.

Mr. Willoughby could only feel compassion for those who did not have his sense of penetration, but were now wrangling among themselves about their petty jealousies, and small points of precedence. Poor, blind souls! Didn't they stop to consider

that they were putting themselves in the way of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubboddy-Jones? Never had he witnessed such folly, and except that it was forced to his attention, he would not have believed it possible.

## CHAPTER VII

ONE of the world's wise men has declared when you praise a woman's beauty you endanger her soul.

With this moral in view, the reader is invited to study Madge Willoughby at a most trying period of her life. She was turning penitent against the snares of Mammon in pure chagrin, and was indulging in theories of self-immolation.

She had been petted, and flattered, and all but spoiled, until a rude awakening came to her in the startling events we have been narrating. She felt now that her pride had been brought low and her idols shattered.

Neither did she seek to spare herself. On the contrary, she admitted that she had yielded too easily to the blandishments of society. The punishment that was so humiliating to her pride was deserved.

But the kind of self-chastisement to which she now submitted means much to her sex. Doubtless every young girl has set up in her heart an altar to an unknown god, on which she may offer incense to false ideals in all innocence. Some day, however, an awakening is bound to come, and with it womanhood will assert itself.

Such now was the case with Madge, although she was too mortified to understand it at first.

How did she ever live through the ordeal of her mother's divorce? When it was over she went back to the hotel and had a good cry.

And even now the reaction began to work for good. A voice that was brave and true whispered to her conscience, and bade her take hope. She was free at last. She had thrown off the shackles of Mammon, and would never be enthralled again. Bitter as these experiences were, they were making a woman of her.

She needed such comforting thoughts, for there were plenty of people eager to remind her of the things she would fain forget. The enemies of the late Mrs. Humphrey Provost seemed to take delight in tormenting her. Foiled of their real prey, they turned to this girl, who had been the other woman's confidante, and poured their hate in her ears. Little did they suspect how deeply they wounded her. She dared not protest, for fear she might say too much, but the stories she was forced to listen to made her rage.

What could she think of a mother who ran away and left her to endure all this alone and unprotected?

Mrs. Saltearth continued to attack her late sister-in-law long after people ceased to be interested in the matter. It is not necessary to give in detail the various crimes which she charged to Prudence's account, unless one were anxious to show how rela-

tives can hate each other when their interests clash. It is significant, however, that factional fights broke out among the elect on account of this divorce. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Prudence had bequeathed a legacy of trouble to society, which may have been her object all along. People began now to dig up grudges against each other, and to air them, with disastrous results. Two branches of one prominent family fell to wrangling about some trifle, and one of them left America in a rage, never to return. In short, a social reign of terror seemed to have swept over the professionally-fashionable world about this time, and ere it had worked itself out society had undergone a change.

It is worthy of remark, however, that when the affair had blown over, Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones very graciously permitted herself to remember that she had forgotten all about it.

It was this master stroke that increased her reputation as a society leader, and brought the different factions to her feet again.

But where was Mr. Willoughby all this time, and why did he not come to his niece's aid? As her natural guardian, he should have comforted her now. Could it be that he had grown indifferent to her altogether?

Do not judge him harshly, reader. He was too much taken up with other matters to notice whether Madge was in trouble or not.

We must remember that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones claimed his attention, and in his devotion to her

interests he was capable of forgetting his own flesh and blood.

It is hardly necessary to reiterate the fact that Mrs. Snubbody-Jones believed outsiders and new people were plotting against society during this crisis. Did she not permit herself to pose as a martyr largely on their account? With diabolical cunning, they were scheming to get the elect at loggerheads, so as to advance their own interests. This present schism was of their making, she argued, and held herself aloof from the petty quarrels into which all her friends were drawn. Her time to act would be when a crisis was reached, and new people and outsiders needed to be disciplined.

It was Mr. Willoughby's privilege to share her prejudices, and be her confidant, at this trying period. If he had admired Mrs. Snubbody-Jones heretofore, he learned to regard her as the real champion of society now, and it would not have been difficult to persuade him that her name should be enrolled among the world's greatest and best.

Let there be no mistake about this matter. Others are responsible for the liberties of America. Mrs. Snubbody-Jones claims to have made society in America by founding the professionally-fashionable set. When we are ready to erect a monument to the genius of the drawing-room, her rights cannot be ignored.

Few people realize what a tremendous task it is to produce an aristocracy in a land of extensive liberty, where any attempt to set up a class system

would be resented. To found society in America, on the same lines that have succeeded in England or France, would be effort thrown away. Besides, servile imitation is not in keeping with our self-esteem. If we must have privilege, let it be American, at least, and in sympathy with the American idea.

For society we must have, that is certain.

What! Must we submit to the patronage of some class in Europe because we have nothing of our own to compare with it? Are we a lot of barbarians, without manners, without refinement, without high ideals? Are Americans only to receive the masses of Europe, and accept their standards? Can we never hope to meet its nobility on their own level?

Democracy must not expect to drag things down too far!

It is high time our social Declaration of Independence were written, so that all the world may read.

Was there ever civilization worthy of note that did not have some form of aristocracy in it?

But how are we to have a privileged order in a country where equality is preached?

Ask Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones. Time and again she had declared there was but one way to do it, and that was to make a profession for it. Place society on a par with law, medicine, or art. Let it be a great specialty, a science unto itself, that peo-

ple can take up as a life work. Then the American upper class will come.

But an aristocracy without titles must be professional.

There is no other chance for it.

There can be no doubt about this. Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby had investigated the matter, and he shut his eyes against the claims of all other leaders. They might become powers within some clique. They could exploit themselves in local connection. But the great national figure in the world of privilege and fashion was Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones, who created the professionally-fashionable set.

However, we must not forget that she chose to consider herself a martyr to her position. Were not her very slumbers haunted by visions of outsiders and new people?

But if the reader is going to pump up sympathy for her now, let it be of the crocodile kind.

There is too much crocodile genius in these days and too much crocodile art.

It is also possible that there may be crocodile heroes, and crocodile martyrs.

Therefore, we can readily understand why it was that Mr. Willoughby ignored his niece at this trying period. If, however, further excuse is needed for him, it must be borne in mind that the girl was dangerous from his standpoint. There was no telling what she might do next, nor what class of people she might choose to be identified with. She was capable of becoming the champion of some outsider

who was very objectionable to Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones. Naturally, her uncle felt he was justified in washing his hands of her.

Left to herself, Madge became very morbid, and she took a cynical view of the fashionable world in which she had been moving. Society, with its glamor, its appetite for sensationalism, its shallow ostentation, how she detested it! It seemed to have unmasked itself all at once, and she fancied she beheld the cloven hoof, and heard the mocking laugh of the Blessed Saint Mammon, whom all these poor deluded creatures were serving, to their undoing.

For, as Christ came to redeem men, Mammon is trying to corrupt them.

Thus the forces of evil war on truth.

Madge never suspected that there was so much religion in her nature as she discovered now. Or was it puritanical heredity that spoke to her conscience, and was calling out forces that make for character-building?

But, strange as it may seem, she went back to the very society she was criticising with an added zest for it. This time, however, it was not to copy it, but to try to forget.

People noted the change in her, and it began to be whispered that she was dangerous. She said bright things, but they cut. Some knowing ones even hinted that it was on her account Van Whist Bridges had left America so suddenly. Word came from Paris that he was very bitter against Ameri-

can girls. He was heard to declare that they ought to be sold to Turks, and shut up in harems. However, he had evidently decided to settle down to matrimony. Soon after his return he commissioned his mother to get him a wife in France, and he was careful to stipulate the exact amount of *dot* she must bring him.

But we must not think, because we have snapped some heart-string, that our lives are to be out of tune forever. It is mended sooner than we think, and we are sure to fit a tougher cord in its place. Thus Madge was beginning to argue, her natural strength of mind asserting itself at last.

Jack Allers told her once that she needed some humiliation to bring out the best that was in her. She recalled these words with a feeling of regret. It was mortifying to think that he had read her character so well. He was above weaknesses himself, and doubtless he considered her frivolous. If she could meet him again he would have reason to change his opinion. Frivolous, indeed! Jack Allers would learn a lesson, if she could talk with him now for a brief half hour.

But here, again, came a second shock. One day she received a frantic letter from Mrs. Tom Allers, begging her to come to her at once. She announced that Jack had been wounded, perhaps killed, at San Juan, and Tom was hurrying to Cuba to bring him home, dead or alive.

## BOOK VIII

### CHAPTER I

When the Stars and Stripes are waving,  
In the heaven so free;  
When heroes death are braving,  
Think, oh, think of me!  
And remember,  
Oh, remember,  
The Union won't dismember!  
And again I say remember  
That I died—  
That I died—  
For Liberty!

AGAIN we are forced to touch on military events, and must beg the reader to bear in mind that, while the incidents above narrated were taking place, Johnny Trumps was winning glory for himself and his flag, both on land and sea.

If the war had been a cleverly planned drama, gotten up on a large scale for the entertainment of the American people, it could not have been more of a success than it was. No sooner did the curtain go down on one act, amid international applause,

than it went up on another equally startling and unexpected; and as the plot developed there were unfolded to the astonished gaze of the public sensational climaxes which rivaled the blood-and-thunder plays of the stage. There is no more artistic war in all history, from a purely dramatic stand-point.

Perhaps, however, it was not orthodox in one particular, in that it broke the law of place. But it did not offend in regard to unity of time and action. For, no matter where the scenes were laid, the Americans were scheduled to thrash the enemy on a given date, and with so ridiculously small loss to themselves that the feats performed by the hero of a Bowery melodrama were fairly outdone. Some of the public who were supposed to make up the audience could not believe these victories on first report. However, they had to get used to them, and were soon resigned to hearing of achievements that surpassed the feats of ancient knights-errant.

But what was it made San Juan a watchword in American history, so that to-day it is taking the place of Bunker Hill?

Listen to the story of an insignificant private in the ranks, who was there, saw with his own eyes, felt with his own soul, and told it to a comrade who could not get there, but wanted to hear the tale from a fellow-private's own lips.

There was a lot of confusion at the time of the embarkation in Cuba. Officers were running around like mad, screaming their lungs out, and trying to

find where we were at. Some said we didn't have enough rations. Some said we didn't have the right kind of a gun. Some said there wasn't enough smokeless powder. Some said nobody knew where anything was, and the army was going to the perdition bow-wows.

Johnny Trumps was working like a Trojan, and he was not feeling good, either. He was being pleaded with in one breath to do more than he was doing, and in the next he was being cursed because he couldn't. Everything was babel, chaos, and Johnny Trumps was feeling blue.

Then all at once something remarkable happened.

Out of the swamps and morasses sneaked a lot of Gomez's men, and invaded the American camp. They were gaunt, starved fellows, mere living skeletons. On their emaciated faces was stamped all the suffering of poor Cuba. They raised their streaming eyes to heaven, and called down God's blessing on Old Glory and the Boys in Blue.

Now came the miracle.

There is plenty of poetry in Johnny Trumps, only he isn't going around parading it. As we wish to be polite, however, let us say his sentiments express themselves in the following lines:

“In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across  
the sea.

As He died to make men holy, let us die to make  
men free.”

This was what Johnny Trumps thought, all right, but it wasn't what he said. He dropped the box he was lifting and cried aloud: "What the hell!" And it wasn't an oath, neither.

Then he sent an ultimatum to his officers: "Lead us on! We want to fight!"

And the officers obeyed.

Neither was it the first time they had received instructions from the privates in the ranks. During the Civil War the soldiers sent word to their general once that they would not pull a trigger unless in the next battle the men in shoulder-straps let them fight to a finish, without calling them off. The general promised, and the battle that followed lasted three days, was the bloodiest in our history, and the turning point in the conflict.

Now it was those Cuban faces, those Cuban tears, those Cuban blessings, that won the battle of San Juan Hill. After that, Johnny Trumps did not care whether he had enough rations, whether his gun was the right pattern, whether there was smokeless powder in the army or not. He started for San Juan, and nothing could hold him back.

Listen, now, old Mother Europe, with all your mighty armaments, with your love of power. San Juan has become an American watchword. No foreign despotism shall ever place its foot on the necks of an American people again. San Juan! So mote it be!

Once it was Bunker Hill, and Mother England learned a lesson. Then it was "Remember the

'Alamo!" and the Latin-American got his dose. Then it was "Save the Union!" and we taught ourselves something we shall never forget. Now it is the Monroe Doctrine, and the others are dead issues.

But perhaps there was just a touch of bravado in it all. At least there was a feeling that the war would not last long, and it were best to make the most of it while it did. Wars, nowadays, are rare sport, anyhow, and men that have trained a lifetime may never smell powder. The poor beggars left behind in camp are having the fight drilled out of them, and are getting the fever in the bargain. How glad some of them would be if they could have your chance! So make the most of your opportunity, and the odds be hanged!

Our men were there to force the fighting, not to display a knowledge of the finer art of war. They were after that other army, and they were going to get it, too; not part of it, but the whole outfit, from general down to company cooks.

But Nemesis was America's ally. The sins Spain had committed, the wrongs she had done humanity, had risen up against her and taken arms.

## CHAPTER II

THE gallant N-th bore a prominent part in this very trying campaign, and merited applause for the way it signalized itself. From Guasimas to Santiago, its record was one of honor, and one day an incident befell which showed what its reputation was in high quarters.

They were returning to camp after a hard march, when a general rode in among them. He appeared so suddenly that the officers had no time to command the customary salute, and he forbade it by a gesture.

“Don’t salute me!” he cried. “I salute you!”

He took off his hat, and remained bareheaded as the column filed by, the men cheering wildly.

Charley Poindexter was reported among the dead in one battle. He was seen to take such chances with that field-gun of his that everybody assumed he must be killed. Nevertheless, when the action was over he showed up unharmed, and refused to say anything about himself. But his commanding officer afterward recommended him for promotion.

Dick Twaddleby got a reputation for being a sharpshooter in a way that was somewhat ludicrous. Happening to fire into a tree at random, a Spaniard

tumbled out of it, to the astonishment of everybody. Perhaps, too, Richard was surprised himself, only he did not betray it, but fell to reloading his piece, as if this sort of thing were his specialty. Henceforward he was numbered among the crack marks-men of the regiment.

Stacey Mansfield was wounded at El Paso, and might have bled to death if it had not been for a young surgeon who followed the men into the firing line to look after the wounded. He picked Stacey up, staunched his wound, and carried him to the rear on his own shoulders until he fell in with the hospital corps.

But one of the bravest and most daring of them all, in fact, one of the most daredevil men in the regiment, was Jack Allers.

He had been such a moody fellow until the real fighting began, many thought he lacked stamina, and his tentmates decided he was morose and ill-natured. But the reckless way in which he threw himself into a battle redeemed his reputation later on, although there was a kind of dull despair about his very bravery.

He used to get letters from his sister-in-law, which he devoured eagerly. They were full of approval of the course he had taken, Mrs. Tom even declaring she wished she were a man herself, so she could be a soldier. But there was no mention of Madge in any of these epistles.

One day he ran across a New York paper, and after reading it he became moodier than ever. He

had seen Madge's name mentioned in connection with some social event, and the inference he drew therefrom did not comfort him. The girl is heartless, selfish, and wholly given to frivolity, he told himself. The world of wealth and fashion has ruined her beyond hope. He had held a different opinion of her once. There was so much good in her, so much to admire, to put faith in, that he had believed she would resist temptation, but Mammon had her now.

The only antidote for his melancholy was excitement, and fighting could furnish that. Therefore, he was eager for danger. It is almost miraculous that he was not killed, but, somehow, fortune favors the daring.

Again he found himself excusing her conduct. After all, she was only influenced by others. It was Mammon that had corrupted her—Mammon, selfish, blasé, cynical. It seemed to be sneering at him now, ridiculing his passion, denying him love and happiness. He fancied he could hear its mocking laugh, and it grated on his ear. Society, as he depicted it, was a debauched, sensual monster, that was gloating over his despair. He loathed the very thought of it, and sought to forget it in the danger about him.

From these gloomy reflections he roused himself one evening to discover that the regiment was bivouacked at the foot of the San Juan hills, expecting to storm them in the morning. Silence hung over the encampment like a pall, but it was in vain

that men sought repose. The nervousness that precedes a battle tells on the bravest, and even old veterans felt it now.

A few soldiers, seemingly indifferent, were gathered about a campfire, which threw out a feeble light. Some were sewing numbers on their coats, so their bodies could be identified. Others were writing letters home, or, gathered in groups of two and three, were pledging each other to carry messages to friends and families far away. There was a fearful tension of uncertainty hanging over the camp that tried the nerves of the most stoical.

Jack Allers noted these things with a grim smile, and his heart exulted within him. Here again was the chance for which he was looking. Again manhood was to be put to the proof, and of this he had no fear.

Already the colors were being carried through the ranks to keep up the courage of the men, and at the sight murmurs of applause burst from every lip. No one knows how much that flag stands for until he sees it leading the way to glory. It is the symbol of all the soldier holds dear—honor, fidelity, faithfulness unto death.

Now the ranks were forming, preparatory to the attack. It is a great relief, because this thinking about it is so demoralizing. Forward is spoken, and the command is obeyed with alacrity. There is a faint glimmer in the east, which many a hero turns to look at, not knowing whether he may behold the like again. But no man falters.

"To the bayonet! At them, my bullies!"

The column is breasting the hill now, a circle of fire marking its advance; a circle that always goes forward, nearer to the crest, where other circles are blazing and flaming, in the effort to hurl it back—but all in vain.

Jack Allers is in the thick of it now, and the fierce joy of the warrior is upon him. Each throb of his pulse, each beat of his heart, each breath that he draws, seems to keep time to the battle measure. On he goes, every step toward glory, every second lengthened into a span. Already the enemy's lines are in sight. Already their officers can be seen, half rising on their elbows to aim their pistols. He has set his bayonet for the lunge. Now, then!

Suddenly a cry of agony bursts from his lips. He feels a sharp pain in his side, is borne to the earth by some irresistible power, where he lies moaning, and writhing in agony.

## CHAPTER III

Now that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones approved of the war, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby suddenly bloomed out as an ardent patriot. He followed the movements of the army with keen interest, and enthused over the naval victories. He could not wonder that our efforts were everywhere crowned with success when society was with the soldiers in spirit. How it must inspire those brave fellows to feel that the Uppercrust-Millers and Saltearths were applauding them! And the consciousness of Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones's approval must hang over them like a presiding genius.

So Mr. Willoughby reasoned, at least, and he gave way to the promptings of patriotism. The fact that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones had permitted herself to indorse the government was of greater consequence in his eyes than the stand any of the powers of Europe might take on this same issue. The great American people had every reason to feel perfectly satisfied with themselves at last.

Moreover, society was making a fad of trying to do something for the comfort of the soldiers. When Mr. Willoughby saw people of the highest

standing going out of their way to do this, he decided that their lot was not so hard, after all. Dainty ladies who were queens of the drawing-room did not hesitate to visit hospitals, and take delicacies to the sick and wounded heroes. The heart of the whole nation went out to these brave fellows in the hour of triumph, and it was only fitting that it should. For Johnny Trumps did not come marching home from Cuba with flags flying. He had to be carried home on a stretcher. There is no way of telling just how many different kinds of fever there are in that unhappy isle, but Uncle Sam's boys got all that were known to the natives, and some few besides.

One day a transport came into the harbor having on board the members of the gallant N-th, whose deeds had made them famous. A great crowd went down to the pier to welcome them, in holiday fashion, but the sight they saw did not move them to even cheer. Men who were the image of death were carried off the ship on stretchers by comrades; others tottered down the gangplank, only to faint with the effort of walking ashore. Not a man in the party but looked aged and broken.

There was not a sound from the holiday throng at sight of this awful spectacle. Everyone was awed by it. Men looked on in pity, and women sobbed aloud.

But in the reaction that followed such revelations there was some danger that the soldiers would be killed by over-indulgence. Fortunately, how-

ever, Uncle Sam came forward at this juncture and took command. He has been in the war business for some time, and he knows what to do in emergencies. In spite of the protests of their friends, in spite of the howls of the newspaper wiseacres, entire commands were hurried off to detention camps.

Madge had fled away to Heathdale with Mrs. Tom Allers as soon as she heard about Jack. The friendship that had existed between these two women revived and grew stronger in this hour of affliction. They seemed to have become necessary to one another now.

Mrs. Tom bore up bravely during the uncertain weeks that followed her husband's departure, but she said afterward that it was because Madge was such a comfort to her. But when she got a telegram, saying Jack was alive, and would be brought home as soon as he could be moved, she cried like a baby.

Who should show up in Heathdale one day but young Quizzledown, or rather the shadow of what he once had been. He was fresh from a fever hospital, and nothing but skin and bones. He swore that the greatest hardship he had to endure in the army was when he was cut off from his cigarette base of supplies, and to this fact he was inclined to attribute his sufferings. He sought the clubhouse in Heathdale, where he could smoke to his heart's content and fortify his wasted constitution with the club cocktail.

Now, because Mrs. Tom had some experience at nursing, and because she was eager for something to do, in order to get her mind off her troubles, she persuaded Quizzledown to put himself in her charge. He agreed, quite cheerfully, to pose as an invalid for her benefit, although he had pinned his faith on the club cuisine. Mrs. Tom declared afterward if it had not been for this work she would have gone mad.

One by one the rest of the exiles returned to Heathdale as they got discharged from the detention camp, and Mrs. Tom had her hands full. Of course, the club cocktail required time to effect a cure, although every man of them swore by it. Charley Poindexter needed nothing but the sight of his view to make him forget his hardships. He had been in a bad way, but when he stood in front of his window, a glad light sprang into his eyes that prophesied a speedy recovery. It was rumored that Sergeant Mansfield's mind had been affected, and there was danger that the trouble would be permanent; but Stacey hastened to get his intellect down to billiard balls, and soon demonstrated that these reports were all moonshine.

But Jockey Van Hurdle did not come back.

Jack Allers was the last arrival. Tom had hard work to keep him out of a government hospital, even when he succeeded in getting him on American soil. He insisted, however, that his brother was likely to die anyhow, so the authorities were persuaded to give him up to his family. Tom felt

sure that home, and home care, alone, would give him the only chance for his life.

There was a silent demonstration in his honor when Heathdale was reached. Friendly faces greeted him with anxious glances, for Jack Allers's deeds had been newspaper talk, and everybody thought a hero had come home to die.

## CHAPTER IV

OUR gentle muse must needs sigh for a breathing spell after the experiences it has had following in the wake of an army, and dwelling on such blood-curdling scenes. It would fain forget about battles and murder and sudden death, and shut its ears to the din of arms. It would much prefer to bask in the sunshine of Mrs. Snubbddy-Jones's favor, and revel in the full glory of a professionally-fashionable reputation. But it is forced to linger in the sick-chamber yet awhile, and give some attention to invalids.

Poor Mrs. Tom! The strain had been too much for her, and when Jack arrived she simply collapsed. She had borne up bravely, so far, but, worn out by anxiety now, she took to her bed, and the doctor forbade her to leave it, under penalty of a long siege of sickness. Hereupon, a singular thing happened.

Madge insisted on nursing Jack herself, although Tom protested against it stoutly, in the fear that she would overtax her strength. Mrs. Tom seconded her husband's protest, but only in a half-hearted way. For she had come to have great faith in Madge's ability, and she told Tom so. The

question was finally left to the doctor to decide, and he ultimately ruled in Madge's favor.

Now that doctor was a shrewd old chap, and he knew something of human nature, besides bodily ailments. He had diagnosed people's diseases until he had come to be a good mind-reader. He was a deep old chap, and all at once he made a discovery.

He noticed one day, when somebody came into the sick-chamber, the patient, all unconscious though he was, seemed to know that somebody was near. He was a little startled at first, but he soon found out other things equally surprising. When somebody rubbed the patient's brow he stopped moaning, and when somebody held his hand he dropped off to sleep with a smile on his face. But he was a wise old chap, this family physician, and he kept his own counsel.

Soon other symptoms appeared, and were carefully noted. When somebody left the room, the patient got restless. When somebody came back, the patient grew better. When somebody fed him, the patient had appetite. When somebody administered medicine, the patient took a brace. Oh, he was a shrewd old chap, this doctor, and he believed there were things in disease not treated about in *materia medica*.

He maintained a very sober bearing when in somebody's presence. He talked very learnedly about the case, and used the biggest jaw-breaking words in the dictionary to describe the symptoms.

All the same, he knew that there was one little word in somebody's keeping that would settle things in short order. Oh, he was deep, deep, deep, and he understood this affair, all right. He looked gravely into somebody's eyes, and read there a secret they were trying to conceal, but could not hide from him, because he was such a knowing doctor. To all outsiders he assumed a very professional, pompous air, looked as wise as an owl, and told everybody he was sure Jack Allers would pull through.

He showed the same good sense in regard to his other patient. For when Mrs. Tom declared that the smell of her husband's cigar was more to her than all his medicine, he told Tom to smoke in her room, and read to her, in order to quiet her. "And by the way," he added, "let Miss Willoughby be with her patient, and don't bother her. She is doing capitally." Oh, he was a fine old doctor, and no mistake!

Tom Allers, too, must have become wise all at once, as he suddenly ceased to object to Madge's self-imposed task. However, he was too much of an Allers to tell his suspicions to his wife.

Thus it came about that Madge had her way, and she took care to prove herself equal to the undertaking. One day a great crisis came to her patient, and then it was demonstrated that the old physician was right. Except that she rose to the emergency, there is no telling how he would have pulled through it. But the doctor had warned her

that she must act promptly, and fear nothing, as it was his only chance.

In his wild delirium he went over his battles, but she was able to quiet him by simply rubbing his forehead till he stopped muttering and dropped asleep. Once he fell to calling her name, in accents of despair, and then she was thankful nobody was around to hear him. She succeeded in quieting him, however, by assuring him that she was near him now, and would never be cruel to him again. He seemed just like a child, and she treated him as a mother would.

But at last he came to himself, opened his eyes, and beheld her, and lo! the great crisis had come! She tried to be calm for his sake, but somehow she began to tremble violently.

Jack sat up in bed and stared at her in a bewildered way, until at last he had recognized her.

“Miss Willoughby! Madge!”

“Hush!” she cried, raising a finger warningly.

But a look came into his face he could not control, and she saw heroic measures were necessary.

She approached and bent over him, as he watched her with bated breath. She was calm now, but he was visibly agitated.

She kissed him full on the lips.

“There! I love you!”

Then she drew away, with a timid laugh, and her face turned crimson.

But their eyes met, and Jack understood. From that moment he began to get well.

## CHAPTER V

AT length there came a day when the old doctor ceased his visits to the house altogether, and everybody began to congratulate him for the way he had pulled his patient through. Jack Allers was not only on his feet again, as sound as a dollar, but he recovered so quickly that the medical fraternity, who knew about the case, and the gossips, who did not, were equally dazed by it. They crowded around the doctor now, and pestered him with questions. But he was a wise old boy, and the way he jollied his brethren of the craft, and stood off the gossips, was a credit to his erudition. He assumed an owl-like, professional air, contracted his eyebrows, pursed his lips, and gave them the biggest jaw-breaking words in the medical dictionaries. In fact, he went out of his way just to invent confusing phrases to apply to this case. He even wrote an article about it, which was published in a dry-as-dust medical paper, and was so technical as to be almost incomprehensible. Oh, he was a wise old chap, and he knew how to hide a delicate secret under scientific bombast.

Now that Mrs. Tom was up again, the house took on its wonted cheerfulness. Her indisposition

passed away with Jack's recovery, and she was as irrepressible as ever. She could not thank Madge enough for taking her place by Jack's side, and tending him as she would have done herself. She pressed her to her heart, and swore she would always be a sister to her hereafter. She was proud of her skill as a nurse, and praised her to Tom, to Jack himself, to everybody. When people remarked the cure had been most miraculous, Mrs. Tom snapped her fingers, and said: "Fudge! All he needed was to get away from those horrid camps and have home care."

Tom Allers received his wife's statements with a very grave face, which convinced her that he agreed with her for once in his life. But the fact was, Tom Allers was getting deep—almost as deep as that old doctor. He had learned how to account for things in mystifying language, and, Allers-like, he took care to keep his wife as much in the dark as possible. He suddenly discovered that she ought to take rides with him on pleasant afternoons. It was good for her health, and besides, the old doctor recommended it. Jack could be left with Madge, who had proved herself such a good nurse, and Mrs. Tom should consider her overtaxed constitution. Yes, Tom Allers was getting wise—almost as wise as the old doctor.

Now it hath been mentioned already that there was a certain arbor situated in the midst of the Allers place, so surrounded by trees and shrubbery as to form a secret bower. But it has not been stated

that there was one Miss Cynthia Hawkins, a maiden lady, living in the next house, on the same side of the street, which is to the point. She was a most estimable creature, albeit given to gossip, and reputed to be much concerned in the affairs of others. In particular, she was much interested in everything that took place in the Allers household, because Mrs. Tom, who knew her weakness, did the most eccentric things whenever she saw Miss Cynthia looking her way, and thereby kept the gossips in a state of excitement.

Therefore, it came to pass, when Jack and Madge were observed one afternoon to approach this arbor along the gravel path, and enter the shrubbery, Miss Cynthia Hawkins, aforesaid, decided something must be in the wind worth telling the neighbors about at the next tea-drinking.

The appearance of this young couple, we may add, was very suspicious. Madge was carrying a book, and Jack bent under the weight of a cushion. Miss Hawkins happened to be sitting at the kitchen window, cutting peaches for supper, and, as she herself declared, had no intention of spying on other folks. But she put aside her work at once and turned to the clock to see what time it was. In this way she was able to calculate the exact second when they reached the arbor, allowing for the kitchen clock being just seven minutes slow. The author regrets to say that he has forgotten this important datum.

Furthermore, he does not hesitate to state, without mental reservation whatsoever, that there is no way of telling what actually took place in that arbor. However, Miss Cynthia's testimony must be admitted in court, and the reader, who is judge and jury in the matter, may reject it, if so minded.

Miss Hawkins testifies as follows:

That she is a single woman, and lives with a bachelor brother, who happened to have gone to market this afternoon. That she had no intention of meddling with the young folks, but only fell to wondering whether they were going to stay to tea out in the arbor, as she knew others had done on pleasant days, because it was just the kind of a place a body would want to picnic in. That she could not see what they were doing, because of the shrubbery that intervened between her and the arbor aforementioned, and for this reason she climbed up into her garret to get a better view from her attic. That she only saw another tree, or trees, obstructing the view, and then tried windows on the lower floor, with the same result. That she was careful, when looking out of a window, to turn the slats noiselessly, so they need not hear it, and have hard feelings toward her in consequence. That she afterward went out to the barn, and looked through the loft door, and the hen-house window. Failing in them, she returned to the house, taking care to keep on her side of the lot. That she tried the cellar window next, but there was a rose bush in the way. That just as she was about to give up

she happened to think of the stoop door, and, being afraid to open it, looked through the keyhole. That after looking through the keyhole ten seconds, by the clock, she did get a glimpse of the interior of the arbor, and is willing to swear that she saw the couple holding hands, and sparkling.

At this point we intend to examine Miss Hawkins's evidence.

The distance between her side door and this arbor must be five yards. Miss Hawkins confesses that she is near-sighted, and wears glasses, and even then has to squint in order to behold anything very far removed. Does it not stand to reason, then, that a woman, looking at an object so distant, through the narrow opening afforded by a keyhole, might be deceived in her vision? Moreover, she herself admits that she could not make out for at least ten seconds whether it was the young couple that she saw. Might it not be possible that she mistook something else for them? Finally, is there not a probability of bushes or shrubs presenting themselves in such a way as to look like a man and woman holding hands?

On this argument, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, we rest our case.

## CHAPTER VI

ONE day Tom Allers announced that Jack and Madge ought to take drives together. He had chanced to meet the old doctor, who advised it. He said they had both been through a great ordeal, and needed this sort of recreation. Oh, he was a fine practitioner, this wise old doctor, and he always prescribed the right thing for everybody.

When Mrs. Tom heard what the old doctor had said she became alarmed, and insisted that Jack and Madge take a ride every pleasant day.

Now there are some very charming views about Heathdale, and probably this old doctor could appreciate them, and wanted others to do the same. The landscape is wild and rugged, a veritable fairy land. The hills rise straight up from the banks of the noble Hudson, whose lazy waters seem to bathe their feet. The country for miles around is historic. Whig and Tory fought over it in the Revolutionary time, and Cowboy and Skinner harried it. You might expect to meet the shade of Rip Van Winkle here, or Hendrik Hudson and his outlaw crew. It is a region of poetry, of legend, of romance.

But you have to be in love with a pretty girl, as Jack Allers was, in order to appreciate this scenery,

and she must be by your side, so that you may feel the magic of her presence in nature itself. The soft languor of her dreamy eyes must be on river, hill, and forest. The grand old Hudson below must flash them back, and the sunbeams must steal some of their luster. Little birds must spring out of the underbrush, and chirp, "I know! I know! But I won't tell! Chickadee-dee! Chickadee-dee!" The wind that sighs through the trees must whisper a secret with which all the forest is in sympathy. The little brook you cross must babble merrily about it as it hurries away to tell the old river the news. The wildflowers must open their petals, and gossip together, so as to have something to entertain the fairies with when they come at moonlight.

So it seemed to Jack Allers now. Everything was rejoicing, everything in nature was in the secret, and sympathized with him. Why, one saucy little bird sprang up in a hedge, cocked its little eye at him, and straightway began carolling the whole story, so that its mate could hear, the trees, the flowers, and the gossipy brook. Even the fairies, asleep in the cool shade of the woods, learned something of it in their dreams, because they caught the notes of the song, and thought a fairy grandmother was crooning a lullaby.

Madge's eyes were here, were there, were everywhere. The beauty of her cheeks was reflected from the foliage, and the incense of her breath was wafted from fields rich with thyme and aftermath.

He noted how the crickets began to chirp to the euphony of her name, and the katydids joined in their chorus.

Ah! that first proof of love! Who does not feel sympathy for it? That first little thrill that springs into consciousness in the breast! That maiden blush, half eagerness, half self-reproach! That timid smile of affection, just revealed! What is there in human nature more worthy of veneration? The memory of them will live in the heart, to keep love alive when youth hath fled, and desire along with it.

After all, it takes a gentleman to be a lover, and the more of a gentleman a man is the better lover he makes. A woman—and, therefore, to be revered. With all her charms, her virtues, her faults; with all her whims and vagaries, pouting, teasing, mocking, hating, forgiving, loving—a woman still. Reproach her if you will; censure her, if you must; condemn her, if you can, for some act that seems cruel, and the next moment you will be championing her because of her sex. You may pick out a thousand flaws in her character, you may read all her weaknesses, and bewail them, but—you will only end by loving her the more because she has them all.

For she is a woman, and, therefore, to be humored, to be excused, to be ruled by the law of love alone. Men never reason consistently about her because she has set all their rules at defiance.

What man is able to look into some maiden's

eyes without feeling his senses reel? What son of woman will not bow down to the daughters of men and do their will, just as the first lover did when he lost Eden for his infatuation? The story that was told in Paradise when the earth was new, was left unfinished, and the sons of Adam have been telling it to the daughters of Eve ever since, and yet it is unfinished still, and will be, so long as man and maid mate together. Love is an old, old chord, that many a one hath harped on, but there will always be sweet music in it.

"A penny for your thoughts!" Madge cried, and the sound of her voice roused Jack Allers from his reverie.

"I'm afraid you would not give that much for them if you knew what they are," he answered.

"Then, sir, I insist upon knowing!"

"Well, if you must have the truth, I was just thinking of Mabel Watterson."

"And who, pray, may she be?"

"A girl I once met at a Harvard commencement. It seems a long time ago now, too."

Madge's eyes flashed with jealousy. Love was a new thing to her, and to have Jack even think of another girl in her presence was not to be endured. What right had he to think of anybody else, anyhow? It was her first experience with the green-eyed monster.

The little bird uttered a note of alarm, and fled far into the forest. The wind moaned among the tree-tops, and a black cloud obscured the face of

the sun. The brightness left the surface of the river, and the little brook sobbed dismally among the rough stones. The chirp of the cricket and the voice of the katydid were hushed, and the flowers quivered on their stalks. Hark! Back in the woods an owl hooted, and a snake glided across the road, in front of the carriage, and disappeared among the dank weeds.

And yet Jack could only think how beautiful Madge looked as she sat there, her whole countenance burning with the reflection of those haughty eyes. Would angels turn their faces away from her at this moment, or would they, too, be dazzled as he was? Men are not angels, and they, at least, could not withhold their admiration from her, so roused, so defiant.

"Why do you think of her now?" she asked, in a low voice. Jack could see the pout on her lips.

"Because she first taught me what love is, and you have finished the lesson," he answered, with a laugh at her show of temper.

Then he moved closer and bent down and whispered in her ear:

"Madge! Madge! Let me tell you a dream I had once when I was sick, and hovering between life and death. I did not want to live, because I thought you did not care for me, and I was debating with myself whether I had not better die. All at once—was it a dream?—I fancied you came before me, and I called you by name. You bent over me, kissed me full on the lips, and whispered, 'I

love you !' And then I wanted to live for you, and you only. Oh, my darling ! That kiss put life and health and hope into me, and made me feel well again. With the new throb that came to my heart came also love for you, which is part of my existence now. I am here alive to-day because you bade me live. Tell me now, darling, was it only a dream, or is it to be a reality ? Tell me—because if you do not love me, as I love you, I wish I had died !"

Madge's face was crimson now. Her head bent down lower and lower, to hide her confusion. When at last she spoke, it was faintly.

"Oh, Jack ! You won't despise me, if I tell you the truth ?"

"Darling, how can I, when I love you so ?"

"Then, Jack, it—it wasn't a dream. It—it was real. I—I did it to save your life, because, if you had died, I wanted to die also."

## CHAPTER VII

MRS. TOM ALLERS had one of her furies, and Tom should have trembled for himself.

She had just found out, by merest accident, that Jack had been making love to Madge right under her nose, and that Madge had been encouraging him, without letting her know anything about it.

"Oh, dear! Tom, what shall we do?" she asked her unmoved spouse, who sat smoking his cigar, just as he would do if the house were on fire. So aggravating, and so Allers-like!

"Do, love?" asked Tom in turn. "Do nothing, like sensible people. They are both of age, and can take care of themselves."

Now wasn't that like an Allers? Mrs. Tom was in despair.

"Tom Allers, are you in your senses, or is this all due to the fact that you are an Allers, and too good-natured to live? Do you realize that this courtship has taken place in this house, without our knowledge or consent, and everybody will suppose we are at the bottom of it? Do you know that Madge was under our charge, and it was our duty to look after her?"

As Tom did not appear to be staggered by these

statements, his wife found courage to pass on to the more heinous aspects of the case.

"Do you know that Jack carried on this affair right under our noses, and gave us no warning of what he was doing?"

Still Tom did not seem inclined to cry out against his brother's sins, so she let him have what she considered the worst feature of all.

"Did you ever imagine that Cousin Roosevelt may think we have trapped Madge here just to put her in Jack's way?"

This remark aroused Tom, at last, and, to her amazement, he was moved to assert himself.

"I do not know about that," he said, "and I don't care, either. He was glad to have us take his niece off his hands for a while. I can tell him one thing, though. He need not come any of his airs on my brother Jack."

Then, for an instant, something like a frown settled itself on Tom's serene forehead.

What! An Allers touchy! An Allers having pride!

In the novelty of this discovery Mrs. Tom forgot her vexation. She flew at Tom, and began to maul him as she would a tame bear. She pulled his cigar out of his hands and began to study him all over, as if he were being metamorphosed right in her presence.

Tom submitted docilely enough, and, when she had finished, accepted his cigar again, took a puff at it, and arranged his collar. Now she knew he

was only himself, and straightway became dispirited.

“Oh, dear! I am just ready to give up!”

At this point Tom had his say, and, of course, he argued just like an Allers. But he must have been getting ideas from that wise old doctor of late, for he talked just like him. This was the gist of what he said to her:

Jack was of age, and he was able to shift for himself. He had a better income than Tom had, and was not a fool. As to the underhand part of it, he begged his wife to remember that they themselves had been guilty of a deal of duplicity during their courtship. Some of Mrs. Tom’s relations had opposed their marriage, and had snubbed her for not accepting a man they chose for her, and thereby saved her the trouble of falling in love.

This kind of argument gradually allayed Mrs. Tom’s fears, and she began to be reconciled to the course of events. It was all so Allers-like, anyhow! She would just like to pound Jack, though, and she said as much.

For the present, however, she consoled herself by making Tom the recipient of much demonstrative affection, which he bore complacently, as an Allers should.

Tom had her all calmed down by the time Jack and Madge returned from their drive, but the sight of this couple, looking so guilty, and so happy, was too much for her.

"Oh, you two!" she cried. "You two! I know all about it! I have found out!"

Then she sprang up and grabbed Madge, and began to maul her. Then she pounded Jack. Then she mauled Madge again. Then she pounded Jack again. Then she pounded Tom. Then she grabbed Madge, mauled her, and began to pound everybody.

At last she took Madge in her arms and began to sob, and perhaps Madge's tears flowed also. Women are so soft-hearted! Soon the water-works were going full force, as these two silly creatures hugged each other and sobbed together.

At this embarrassing juncture Tom Allers did something that would have been a credit to that wise old doctor himself. He had been sitting there stolidly, smoking his cigar, but now he got off a joke that set everybody to laughing. It was such a dry effort, with absolutely no point to it at all, but, coming from him, it was greeted with a roar, that relieved the situation at once.

## BOOK IX

### CHAPTER I

HEATHDALE was waking up to a new existence, and our old friend, Hamilton Bloodgood, thought his opportunity was coming with its rejuvenation. Society had discovered the place at last, and a Heathdale set was one of the possibilities in the near future. Hamilton had built a fine house there, and had also attached a kennel, that was bound to attract attention. He felt that the fashionable world would vindicate him for his devotion to dogs.

The reader will please remember that we are treating of American society at its formative period, when the reign of Mammon was beginning in earnest. Surely, the study of this exclusive science cannot fail to be interesting. Its gradual rise, from a mere pastime up to a profession, offers an inviting theme for the student of contemporary life. There are special lines of it, too, and only those who devote all their enthusiasm to it can understand how complex these are. Society is a calling, and is fast becoming an art, in this land of strenuous enterprise.

It had become evident to those in a position to appreciate the situation that a few people could not monopolize it. Its diverse interests must be properly divided, and different cliques should have exclusive fields in which to exploit themselves. Local sets were all the rage now, with everything leading up to Newport, and, therefore, Heathdale rejoiced.

None of the natives were more jubilant over its prospects than Hamilton Bloodgood. Perhaps he hoped there would be a dog set in society, and then his opportunity would come.

The honest fellow needed something to encourage him in these days, for he was having opposition from two distinct sources. In the first place, his wife had taken a firm stand on the dog question, so that the situation was decidedly strained.

We regret to say that Hamilton had found it difficult to convince Lillian that a man who could take ribbons at a dog show might claim to be enrolled among the world's famous men. Lillian refused to share his enthusiasm, having a decided dislike for dogs anyhow. Furthermore, she declined to permit them in the house, to roam about it at will, and transform it into an annex to the kennels.

At a council of war, over which his mother presided, Hamilton was forced to give way to her. His mother ruled that the house belonged to Lillian, and she had the right to run it her way. The elder Mrs. Bloodgood also insisted that Hamilton should not live in the kennels altogether, and thereby deprive his wife of his company.

Therefore, the honest fellow welcomed the advent of society to Heathdale, believing that it would vindicate him for his devotion to his pets.

In addition to the trouble he had on Lillian's account, his father had tried to make things unpleasant for him. The elder Bloodgood hoped that his son's marriage would have the effect of sobering him, but when he saw him still going in for dogs his disgust knew no bounds. As Hamilton put it, his father wanted him to become a money shark and forget everything in the scramble for dollars, whereas Hamilton would rather take a prize at the dog show than be president of a banking syndicate. When he heard of the new kennels, his sire lost faith in him altogether.

Indeed, if it had not been for Hamilton's mother he would have taken action against him. She interfered, however, with the result that a compromise was effected ere hostilities could begin. In this way it was arranged that Hamilton should amuse himself as he chose. At the same time, his father announced, tragically, that he washed his hands of his son's affairs, and would not be responsible for the consequences of his folly.

Things were in this state when Jack and Madge called one day to announce their engagement. Madge's first thought was of her foster sister at this time, and Jack shared her feelings. He was fond of Lillian, and had always liked Hamilton Bloodgood. He defended him against the gossips on all occasions, and he took his part with Madge

once in a way she had been able to appreciate. It was when Hamilton first began to devote himself to Lillian, and Madge was in the secret. Rumors of his dissipations, which she would otherwise have ignored, alarmed her on Lillian's account. Jack was able to satisfy her on this head, however.

He argued that Hamilton was more sinned against than sinning. In his opinion, Mr. Bloodgood, Senior, was money mad. Jack was in Wall Street himself, and knew what its temptations were. Hamilton was wise in giving his enthusiasm to other things.

Jack then said something else in this connection which, while it did not bear on the case at hand, made an impression on Madge. But, for that matter, she was very proud of Jack when he was airing his opinions, and she was glad to listen to him on any subject. He always had an original way of putting his arguments.

He declared that there was a secret chapter in the financial history of America. After the Civil War we were a down-and-out nation. Previous to that period we had been England's greatest rival in the carrying trade of the world. After the war England had the field to herself.

Now the English are the greatest of modern diplomats. They practically told us that if we would keep away from the sea hereafter they would save us from bankruptcy. We were forced to accept these terms, and accordingly turned to the development of internal wealth on borrowed capital. In

order to free ourselves from our creditor we had invented the American financial system, which was without a peer in history.

But, of course, there was evil in it, as well as good. Any man that can't give all his attention to it, so that he can live for it alone, had better not touch it.

Coming now to the case of Hamilton Bloodgood, he was a disappointment to his father, no doubt; but he was justified in the stand he took when he refused to settle down in his father's office and devote his life to something he detested. There was money enough in the family already, without forcing the son to get more. Perhaps the time may be at hand when rich Americans can devote their lives to other things than money grubbing, without being thought worthless. A leisure class was not always a harm to a nation. On the contrary, all civilizations have called for it. America must accept one sooner or later.

It would be a waste of effort to attempt to describe the scene that took place between Lillian and Madge when the latter made known the secret of her engagement. Therefore, we will leave the two young women to retire to the house to talk things over without interference from men and dogs, while Jack inspected the kennels.

He was surprised at the sight of these. They had been fixed up regardless of expense, and with a view to the owner using them as a living apart-

ment if the house was denied to him. Hamilton Bloodgood stood on the same plane as his pets in regard to his domestic arrangements. Matrimony without dogs was a failure from his standpoint.

## CHAPTER II

THE exiles of the Mercury Club had recovered from the fatigue of the campaign and had settled down to an Arcadian life again. Tame as it seemed, in comparison with the excitement they had known of late, they managed to stand it very well, being fortified by the club cocktail against ennui.

There had been a decided change of sentiment in Heathdale in their favor. Those who had been hostile to them heretofore were loud in their praises now, and if they felt the need of champions at any time they had only to announce the fact. There was a feeling in some quarters that these young men were heroes, and should be treated accordingly.

However, the exiles were not the kind of lads to have their heads turned by such sudden adulation. They were too gamey, and bore this praise with the equanimity that they had borne censure from the same source. One day an enthusiastic Philistine, coming to the clubhouse, ventured to congratulate Charley Poindexter on the part he had played in the late unpleasantness, but Poindexter turned on him with a frown so resentful that the Philistine wilted at once. Bad form was the

explanation Poindexter afterward gave to excuse his rudeness.

Nevertheless, there were moments when the war would be discussed among them, from the stand-point of the part they had played in it. When cigarettes had been lit, and the cocktail was circulating, and that genial fellowship prevailed which clubmen know so well how to appreciate, the exiles permitted themselves to do a little bragging on the club's account and their own. At such times they agreed it lay between Charley Poindexter and Jack Allers as to who made the best record in the army, and when they told how Stacey Mansfield had acted at El Paso, Stacey took care to keep his intellect down to billiard balls, lest this sort of talk should swell his head.

But whenever they mentioned Jockey Van Hurdle's name it was with visible emotion.

"Jockey picked winners at last," Dick Twaddleby said. "If ever a man died a hero, it was he."

The rest of the exiles agreed with this, and, indeed, the story of his sacrifice, as told by the officer who was with him at the time, while it differed somewhat from the first account, proved the truth of this statement.

This officer was out to locate the enemy, but had not succeeded. The army was pushing forward in the rear, and the general must know his position without delay. The officer suspected an ambush somewhere in front, and it was imperative he should find out where it was; but he hesitated to send any

man on such an errand, as it meant certain destruction. He halted his command, and explained the situation. Jockey volunteered to go and find out, and the volley that killed him told where the danger lay.

Of course, Dick Twaddleby had to air his opinion of the conflict for the edification of the exiles, and the feeling was that he knew what he was talking about, and could give pointers to historians.

"It was a football war," he declared one day. "We scored on Spain whenever we wanted to, and we scored quick. The game was practically settled in the first half. We put ginger into our play, and plunged right through their lines. It was soon demonstrated that Spain was unable to check our interference."

"Right you are, Richard!" Stacey Mansfield (late sergeant) said, as he drew a bead on a billiard ball.

Richard: "If we had let Spain score against us, it would have been disgraceful. In fact, if Spain had even been able to advance the ball, the rooters on the side lines would have howled at us."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "We fought with the limelight full upon us. Our heroes were playing to the galleries all the time, and every once in a while they rested on their arms to catch the applause."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "Our government ought to feel very grateful to Spain, though, for consenting to make

a target of her ships just for our new navy to practice on. Think, too, how considerate it was to permit our army to do a little amateur fighting in her colonies, so as to find out how to conduct itself in actual warfare. Uncle Sam ought to be willing to foot the bill without grumbling."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "Then, too, it was an object-lesson to certain friends of ours. There are fellows across the pond who like to go around shooting their ideas into people, and call it civilizing them. They know now Uncle Sam is a hornets' nest, and they had better let him alone."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "There is our dear John Bull, who has been trying to tell us for the past hundred years or more that the Declaration of Independence is bad form, because he did not write it himself, and he was put out because we couldn't see it. Now he is running around patting himself because he rooted for us in this war, and laughing at the fellows who rooted for Spain. The result is, even Bunker Hill is forgotten, and the Anglo-Saxon has found his better half again."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "The way things are going now, lots of people will suddenly discover how they have always loved us, and have just been waiting for a chance to tell us so. Then the next time we get into a wrangle with some power about the ownership of a swamp in Central America, where there is noth-

ing doing but alligators and yellow fever, some of our dear friends will go so far as to say they don't care what flag floats over those alligators, and they never did, anyhow."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "Oh, it's a great thing to be rated as a first-class power, and your Uncle Sam has got that now. If you don't believe it, just look in Bradstreet's."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "Europe ought to have taken a sensible view of the Monroe Doctrine in the first place, and I think she will now. The native American is no fool. He took title to all the good land over here long ago, and any acres left are given over to fevers and earthquakes, and are not worth fighting about."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Richard: "Why, if it were not for the Monroe Doctrine, some sharper would be selling one of those emperors land on the bottom of the ocean."

Stacey: "Right you are, Richard."

Dick further declared that the most dangerous thing our heroes had to face, according to all evidence, was the army ration; but, then, Richard was a sad wag, and would strain a point, sometimes, in order to raise a laugh.

Young Quizzledown was having no end of fun with Methuselah in these days, and felt that it repaid him for all he had endured in the army, in the way of being forced to forego cigarettes. The

old patriarch had come out a fierce anti-expansionist, and was for hauling down the flag from Fort Sumter to Manila. The contemptuous way in which he repudiated his own arguments when Quizzledown quoted them back to him was ludicrous in the extreme.

The fact of the matter was, the exiles were very happy now. They had proved to their own satisfaction that they were not mollycoddles, and they may be pardoned a little vanity for feeling a bit conceited about it. Besides, Charley Poindexter declared one day that the blowing up of the Maine was very bad form, and then every man of them realized what a hero he had been to serve in the army.

A rumor had reached them to the effect that Heathdale was soon to become a fashion resort, and the exiles took credit to themselves for having been the first to discover it. They realized that the club had great opportunities, and they would be careful to make the most of them. There was bound to be an increase in membership, and new fields of usefulness would be opened to it. Methuselah would have to be suppressed, of course, before they could hope to do anything. He had blackballed every man that joined after him, and would doubtless continue the practice. The exiles saw a chance here to inculcate a proper appreciation for bad form among new members, and they congratulated themselves that they had found a mission in life at last.

One day a little bird fluttered into the clubhouse and began to warble such a pretty tale about Jack Allers and a young lady the exiles had met, that the most cynical of them were fascinated by it. Under the excitement which the little bird's message had caused, somebody even went so far as to state boldly that matrimony is not bad form, and many a hardened exile sighed assent to this.

On the other hand, there were two of their number who did not thrill at this news. Charley Poindexter was somewhat disappointed by it. From the fuss that was being made he had been led to suppose that somebody had discovered a new feature in his view, and for a moment his pulse beat quicker; whereas, Stacey Mansfield kept his intellect right down to billiard balls, refusing to be hypnotized.

"That thing was practically settled ages ago," was his only comment; but the subject could hardly be a pleasant one, when he reflected what a fool he had been to offer Poindexter odds in this very connection.

## CHAPTER III

IT would be impossible to persuade Mrs. Tom Allers that Jack was a hero. The mere fact that he was only an Allers belittled him in her eyes. Nevertheless, Heathdale was proclaiming him, and all the world indorsed its judgment. The wonder is that Jack did not become vain under so much praise.

Not only so, but one day Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones permitted herself to remember that she had met Mr. Allers, and approved him. Hereupon, Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby enrolled himself among his champions.

Bless my soul! He never realized how much he thought of that young man! He had been impressed with him the first time he laid eyes on him, and always believed he would do great things.

As it turned out, this change of front in regard to him was a good thing for Jack, when rumors reached Mr. Willoughby one day that the young man aforesaid was likely to rob him of his niece. Mr. Willoughby had such a horror of sentiment and matrimony that he would have raised objections of a most serious kind, except that Mrs. Snubbbody-Jones's approval reconciled him to the issue.

If Jack had only known how he felt about the matter he would have worried less over the charge Madge laid on him in this connection.

It seemed there was some mystery about her birth and parentage, which she insisted her future husband should know. She commissioned Jack to go to her uncle, announce the engagement, and demand the facts. Then he was to come to her and let her know if it made any difference in his love for her.

Jack was too much of an Allers, and too American, to attach much importance to this matter. Nevertheless, he obeyed the command, it must be confessed, in some trepidation. He felt that he was bearding the lion in his den when he presented himself before Madge's guardian one day to formally ask his consent to their marriage.

Fortunately, he found the lion in the best of humor. He had just received a letter from Mrs. Snubbody-Jones announcing that society was at her feet again. In this epistle she very graciously permitted herself to add that she felt under obligations to Mr. Willoughby for the way he had championed her during the late social crisis.

The submission of the elect was absolute and complete, and the effect of it was sure to be far-reaching. No one doubted now that some conservative influence was necessary to save the fashionable world from itself. Moreover, it had been demonstrated to the satisfaction of everybody that without the leadership of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones it might become the plaything of outsiders and new people.

It began to look now as if a society trust was in sight.

We like to believe that only the good prosper in the world, and it always pleases us to hear of the reward that has come to those who lead a virtuous life. Consequently, the writer cannot repress a feeling of satisfaction in introducing Mr. Roosevelt Willoughby, secure, at last, in the favor of Mrs. Snubbody-Jones.

It ought to be an encouragement to those weary pilgrims who are overburdened in their journey through this vale of tears.

He felt very much elated by the news of his patroness's success. Things had turned out just as he expected, and there was no telling what social triumphs were in store for him hereafter. When a Heathdale set should be recognized he would probably be the most prominent figure in it.

He had already determined to make some changes in his domestic arrangements, in order to meet the demands of his new position. He would have to go about more, and Willoughby Manor would see very little of him from this time forward. Right down in his heart, too, he decided it would be a relief to get rid of Madge. She was dangerous, and might interfere with his plans.

Therefore, Jack Allers should have been less timid about offering to take the girl off his hands entirely.

He went at the matter bluntly enough, and it pleased him to find that his first advances were not

frowned upon. The preliminaries over, Jack grew quite bold, and announced that he wished to build a home in Heathdale, and would take charge of Mr. Willoughby's invalid sister, if there were no objections. Madge was eager to have her aunt live with them, it seemed. Mr. Willoughby kept silent, to be sure, but this might be accepted as his approval of all plans relating to any members of his household. At least, Jack so interpreted it.

Madge had flown upstairs to tell Aunt Kate all about it. She hardly had time to make her blushing confession to the sweet invalid, however, when the word came from below that the course of true love would be all plain sailing.

"You may come down, Madge," Jack called out from the foot of the stairway.

This was the prearranged signal between this pair of conspirators by which they agreed to stand together in forcing Mr. Willoughby's hand.

Madge came tripping down the stairs at once, looking prettier, Jack thought, than he had ever seen her before.

"It is all right, Madge," he said, as she stood for a moment, irresolute, on the threshold. He had reference to the family secret.

But Mr. Willoughby put another interpretation on his words.

"Hem! I have not said so yet."

He regretted his remark a moment later, because it served to introduce a scene which was very painful to him—very painful, indeed.

"Now, Uncle," Madge cried, "it will have to be all right. I have chosen Jack, and Jack has chosen me, and while we wish to be dutiful——"

She got no further, for, disregarding Mr. Willoughby's presence altogether, Jack caught her in his arms, and here followed a scene that caused Mr. Roosevelt to break out into a cold perspiration.

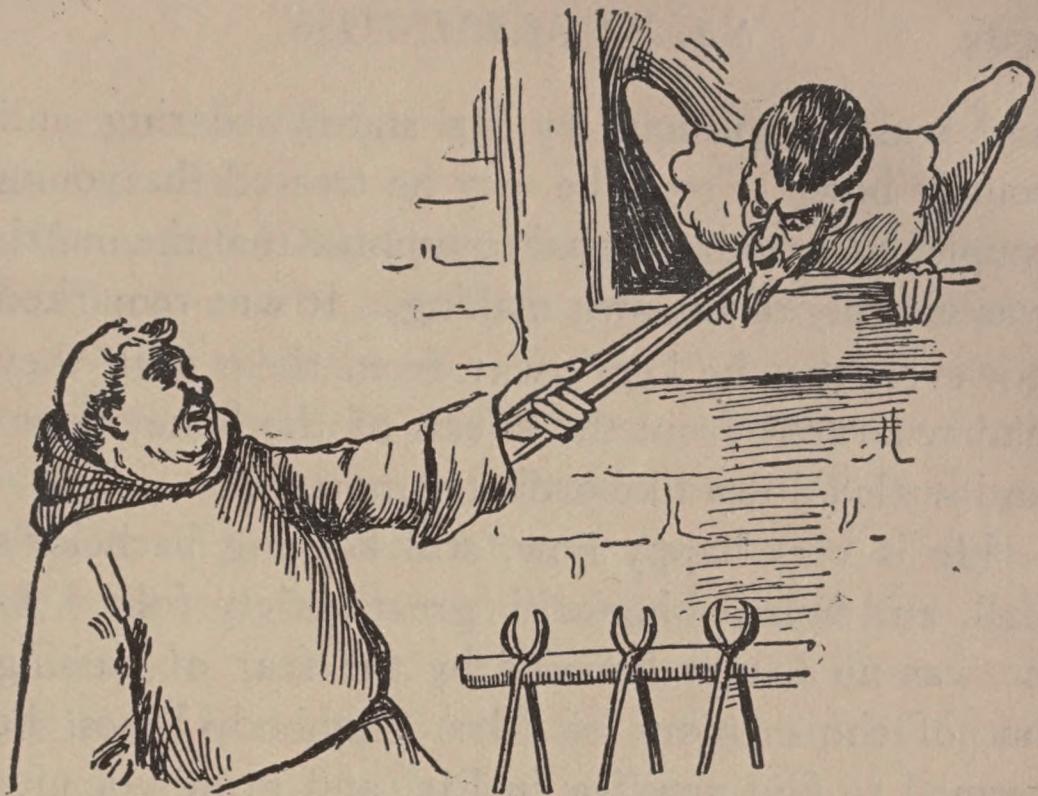
"God bless my soul!"

It was the most un-Willoughby-like thing he had ever witnessed.

"God bless my soul!"

"It will be all right, now, sir, won't it?" Jack asked again.

"Oh!—oh!—oh!—oh, yes! Certainly!" Mr. Willoughby cried, in desperation.



## CONCLUSION

OUR story is ended now, to the tinkling of wedding bells, in the good old fairy-tale fashion, as a romance should. Jack and Madge were married, and lived happily ever after.

Mrs. Tom Allers announced that she was going to have one of her furies when the event took place, but she was able to bear up under the ordeal, thanks to Tom, and even took a prominent part in the ceremony.

But, to all appearances, the most gratified party at the wedding was Mr. Willoughby himself. He cut a superb figure at the reception, to which he took care only the best people should be invited,

and was conspicuous by his stately bearing and courtly bow. From the way he treated the young couple, everybody was led to suppose that the match was entirely of his own making. It was remarked however, that he kept away from them until they had recovered from the effects of the honeymoon, and settled down like ordinary mortals.

He is very happy now, still keeping bachelor's hall, and hobnobbing with great society folk. As he was no longer haunted by the fear of passing out of the memory of Mrs. Snubbddy-Jones, he seemed to find new joy in life, and grow younger with his years.

Then, too, another event happened which contributed not a little to the comfort of this excellent man. His sister, Mrs. Wadham Adams, gave up her charities, to the relief of everybody, thereby vindicating the Willoughby that was born in her. Having lost her husband, and being childless, she came to live with Mr. Willoughby, and proved herself a blessing to her invalid sister. At her brother's suggestion, she made her peace with the fashionable set, so that all her eccentricities were forgiven and forgotten.

Lillian of the Haughty Face finally became reconciled to her husband's hobby, and like a dutiful wife decided to make the best of the situation. For, when sons were born to her they took to dogs in a way that overcame her aversion. As mere tots they made bull-pups their play-fellows, and howled lusti-

ly because they could not take the little animals to bed with them.

Hereupon Lillian saw that fate was against her, and dogs must be admitted to her house on a footing with the family.

Honest Hamilton found home life very much to his liking after this, and would spend his evenings romping with his sons and the pups. Soon his kennels became famous, and his breed was in demand by the best fanciers. Lillian declared, however, that he made as much fuss over selling one of them as he would over selling one of his sons.

We might spin out this story through another volume, telling how Dick Twaddleby, the wag, married an heiress, after all; how Charley Poindexter married Miss Bangup, and how Stacey Mansfield married Poindexter's sister-in-law, as the result of a bet he made in a rash moment. For, one day, it came to pass, the exiles decided matrimony is not bad form, and no sooner had they come to this conclusion than they proceeded to fall into the snares Master Cupid is supposed to set for the unwary.

However, Stacey's case had its ludicrous side. From mere force of habit he offered to bet Poindexter he could marry his wife's only sister within six months after his own wedding, when Poindexter not only snapped him up, but offered heavy odds to the contrary. The temptation was too much for Stacey. He went straight to the girl and told her

about it, and she took him, and won the money for him. Everybody admitted that if Poindexter had not given him such big odds Stacey would have remained a bachelor.

Neither must we forget to chronicle the fact that a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Allers. How it ever managed to live, after the way its mother hugged and mauled it, is a marvel; but it did, nevertheless, and grew up the picture of health, and a regular Allers all over.

People used to wonder why the late Mrs. Humphrey Provost, who had shaken the dust of America off her feet, still kept up a correspondence with Madge, and was always inviting her to visit her in Europe. They wondered more when Madge accepted these invitations, but they never knew the truth.

Thus our tale has spun itself out so that nothing is left now except for the author to make his best bow ere the curtain goes down for the last time. Verily, the world is Mammon's, and under his patronage the carnival of luxury, extravagance, and pride goes on without let or hindrance, so that the mystery is that it does not all end in suicide. He hath fettered us with golden chains, we who might be free, and masters of our own destiny; and, like poor fools, we take pleasure in listening to the jingle of our bonds. There is something ludicrous in this faith of ours in the healing power of riches, except that it is also tragic. We have pinned our

hopes on it without even stopping to ask whether it is only a vile superstition.

As little children we prate the creed of Mammon, and seem to know by intuition what it means. As grown men and women, we find it beyond our power to resist its doctrines. Money is fast becoming a tyrant in this free America of ours. Are we not all down on our knees to it now, worshiping the golden calf, and is it not true that men of to-day go mad after wealth, just as in former ages men went mad after glory?

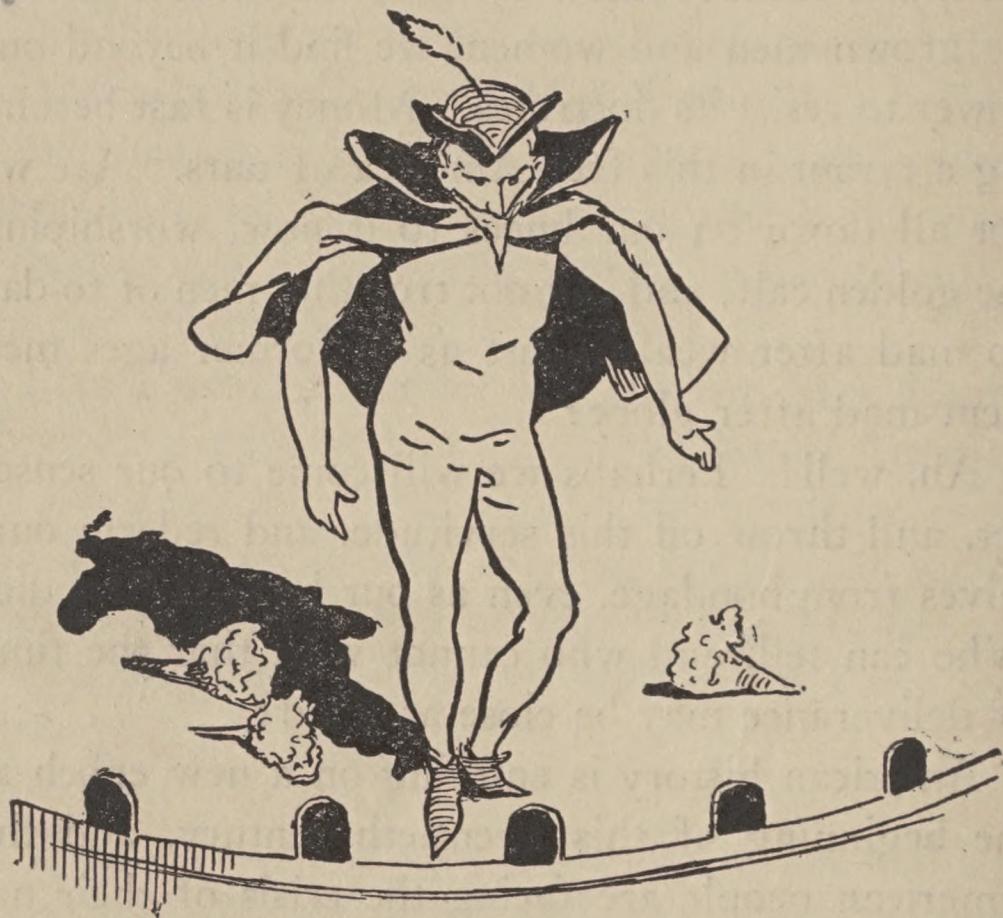
Ah, well! Perhaps we will come to our senses yet, and throw off this servitude, and redeem ourselves from bondage, even as our hero fathers did. Who can tell, and who cannot wish that the time of deliverance may be close at hand?

American history is entering on a new epoch at the beginning of this twentieth century, and the American people are facing the crisis of their national existence. Will they be true to the religion of their forefathers—a religion whose confession of faith sums up in the Declaration of Independence, which hath proclaimed liberty and justice for all mankind—or will they fling it aside and take up with an idolatry that has been the undoing of so many great nations?

Let the people decide for themselves.

Satan, we know, sent Mammon into the world to strengthen himself with men, and corrupt their standards of virtue and morality; but Mammon

turned traitor, like all emissaries of hell, and has gone on strengthening himself ever since at the expense of man and his master.

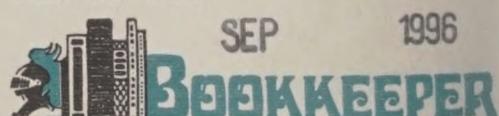


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